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THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE

THE

SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH MIND

99198

BY

FORD MADOX HUEFFER.

Omnes ordines sub signis ducam, legiones meas,
Avi sinistra, auspicio liquido, atque ex sententia.
Confidentia est inimicos meas me posse perdere.
Pseudolus, Act ii. Scene 4.

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TO THE MOST ENGLISH

OF ALL

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AUTHOR'S ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS is the final instalment of a book which the author began to publish three years ago. It occurred to him very much earlier that to attempt to realise for himself these prolific, fertile, and populous islands would be a pleasurable task—to realise them, that is to say, in so far as they had presented themselves to himself and to no other person. It has been a pleasurable task, and inasmuch as, in the form of books, the results attained appear to have given pleasure to quite a number of people, it would be false modesty to pretend to apologise for publishing these results of pleasurable moments.

The author has put into them no kind of study of documents; they are as purely autobiographical products as are the work of Pepys or Montaigne. Setting for himself certain limits—as one might say, certain rules of the game—he very definitely observed those rules and set out—to play.

England rather more than any other land divides

itself into two portions—the Town and Country; for, roughly speaking, no other land has towns so crowded or countrysides so sparsely populated; no other nation has a country type of life so well organised or so characteristic; few peoples have towns so loosely planned or so wanting in self-consciousness.

It is human to think first of the body and then of the soul. And, since Town and Country form together as it were the body of a nation, so the People is the soul inhabiting them. Hence the plan of this book in three volumes, to which—having evolved it several years ago, and observed it as the rule of his particular game—the author has rigidly adhered.

In the first place he gave to his readers a projection of a great English town as he had known it; in the second he provided his personal image of the English countryside. The one volume was *The Soul of London*, the other, *The Heart of the Country*.

In *The Spirit of the People* an attack is made on a rendering of the peculiar psychology of the Englishman—on that odd mixture of every kind of foreigner that is called the Anglo-Saxon race.

The reader is probably familiar with what is called a composite photograph. A great number of photographs of individuals is taken, and one image being

set upon another, a sort of common denominator results, one face blending into another, lending salient points, toning down exaggerations. And, when one speaks of the "Englishman" or the "Frenchman," one refers to a mental composite photograph of all the thousands and thousands of English or French that one has met, seen, conversed with, liked, disliked, ill-used, or beaten at chess.

It is this image as it remains in his own mind—it is this particular "Englishman"—that the author analyses in the present volume. If he differs—this Englishman—from the Englishmen rendered by or known to others, that is only because the author's experience has differed from the experience of others. For the author has, for the purposes of this book, read no other books and studied no statistics. He has lived such a life as he chose or as Fate directed, and has noted such things as accident has brought in his way in the streets or between the hedgerows.

He has dwelt, for instance, very much on the fact that his "Englishman" has appeared to have the characteristics of a poet; he has not dwelt at all on the Englishman as, say, a drinker of strong liquors. That may be because he has been attracted to the contemplative, pleasant, kindly, romantic, active—but quite unreflective—individuals of this nation. And probably he has given drunkards a wide berth.

Both these things he has done unconsciously, if he has done so at all; but the fact remains that he has met thousands of Englishmen who appeared to him to be poets, and hardly tens who have been drunk. Celts who claim to be the only poets, or temperance reformers who wish to see a world reeling towards hugely-crammed workhouses, will have a different vision. The author can only claim to be a quite ordinary man, with the common tastes and that mixture in about equal parts of English, Celtic, and Teutonic bloods that goes to make up the usual Anglo-Saxon of these islands.

The author's original plan—and he has adhered to it rigidly, sternly, and in spite of many temptations—was to write about only such things as interested him. He might, that is to say, have aimed at producing a work of reference. He might have written of the influence on the Englishman of, say, the motor-car, the Greek drama, vegetarianism, or Marxian Socialism. But he has left out these and many other subjects. Distrusting his powers, he has limited himself to attempting to produce an image of the world he has lived in, reflected in his own personality. He has tried, in short, to produce a work of art.

It would, however, be too great insincerity in the author to say that he does not regard a work of art as of as great a usefulness to the republic as a work

of reference. Primarily it should give enjoyment. Secondarily—and that is its social value—it should awaken thought. This a work of reference—a serious, statistical, Blue, or unimaginative work—will seldom do. The artist, however, should be an exact scientist. (This is not a paradox.) His province is to render things exactly as he sees them in such a way that his rendering will strike the imagination of the reader, and induce him to continue an awakened train of thought.

It is all one whether the artist be right or wrong as to his facts; his business is to render rightly the appearance of things. It is all one whether he convince his reader or cause to arise a violent opposition. For the artist's views are of no importance whatever. Who cares whether Dante believed the Guelphs to be villains or saviours? Who cares whether Aristophanes believed that the temple of Asclepius at Tricca was a better sort of Lourdes than that at Epidaurus? The point is that one and the other have given us things to enjoy and things to think about.

Perhaps it is, or perhaps it is not, good that we should enjoy ourselves: that will always remain an open question in a nation where joy is almost invariably regarded as a waste of time and very frequently as a vulgarity. So that it is better, no doubt, to fall back upon that secondary province of

the work of art—the awakening of thought, the promotion of discussion. . . . .

This, however, is not a defence of the present book, but a defence of all books that aim at renderings rather than statements; for that, in essence, is the difference between the work of art and the work of reference. Is not it Machiavelli who says, "It is not in my power to offer you a greater gift than that of enabling you to understand in the shortest possible time all those things which in the course of many years I have learned through danger and suffering"? And if the author has not passed through so many years or dangers as the author of *Il Principe*, neither, presumably, has any reader to-day as much need of instruction as Lorenzo the Magnificent.

F. M. H.

WINCHELSEA,
January 27th, 1906—*August 3rd*, 1907.

THE PEOPLE FROM THE OUTSIDE.

THE

SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE

CHAPTER I.

THE PEOPLE FROM THE OUTSIDE.

THREE years ago I was talking to a Professor of literature near the city of Münster, which is in Westphalia. At a certain point in our discussion my interlocutor said: "But then, the Spirit of your People has always been so blood-thirsty. One becomes almost ill in reading your history, with its records of murders and beheadings."

That this should have been uttered where it was rendered it the more bewildering to one prone to form impressionists' views upon general subjects. For the remark was made upon a level plain, within sight of a city whose every ancient stone must once at least have been bathed in blood. Those levels, vast and sandy or vast and green, stretching out towards the Low Countries, must in the secular wars of Europe have been traversed again and again by the feet of those licensed murderers that are soldiery. The

very church towers of Münster are pointed out to the tourist as characteristic: they are square, because the spires that once crowned them were overturned by Anabaptists in their last desperate stand against the Prince Bishop—a last desperate stand after a siege in which fire, famine, cannibalism and rapine played a part unparalleled in the history of the world. The arcades of Münster witnessed murders of the most terrible: the church towers of Münster are square because, so the legend has it, the Anabaptists set their cannon upon the platforms left after the spires had fallen. And the very outline of the city is dominated still by the pinnacles of the Friedensaal—or hall erected to commemorate the Treaty of Münster,—to commemorate that Peace of Westphalia ending a war that had outlasted generations. Yet, with the glittering city beneath his eyes, with all these reminders of ancient bloodshed plain to the view in the clear air, in the peaceful summer weather, this student of literature could give it, as his particular impression of the English race, that its history in the reading made him ill.

This remark impressed me so singularly that ever since that day, three years ago, I have hardly passed any single twenty-four hours without giving at least some speculation to the psychology of the curiously mixed and mingled populations of the partner predominant in the history and fortunes of these islands. Incidentally, of course, I have speculated upon the history of that other, still more curiously

mingled, and still more predominant, branch of the race that inhabits a western half-continent. As the result of these speculations I have offered to the world two volumes of impressions—the one of this people very much compressed into a great town, the other of this same people amidst the green acres of a restricted island. In the present volume I propose to myself to record a view of this people's corporate activities, of its manifestations as a nation. With the completion of this volume I shall have achieved the task that set itself to me during the night after the afore-mentioned student of literature made his singular remark.

The person who sets himself such a task should, if he is to perform it at all ideally, possess certain qualities and the negation of certain qualities. He should be attached by very strong ties to the race of which he writes, or he will write without sympathy. He should, if possible, be attached to as many other races as may be by ties equally strong, or he will, lacking comprehension of other national manifestations, be unable to draw impartial comparisons. He must be possessed of a mind of some aptness to interest itself in almost every department of human thought, or his view will be tinged with that saddest of all human wrong-headedness—specialisation. He must look upon the world with the eyes neither of a social reformer nor of an engineer, neither with the eyes of a composer of operas nor of a carpenter. He must, as well as it is possible for a single man to

compass it, be an all-round man. He must, in fact, be an amateur—a lover of his kind and all its works. At the same time he must be sufficiently a literary artist to be able to draw moving pictures; for his work, if it fails to interest, loses its very cause for existence. To what extent I who write these words possess these qualifications, I must leave to my biographers to decide.

* * * * *

Let me now attempt to put before the reader the reasons for the frame of mind of my excellent friend, the student of literature. It must be remembered that he is not English: he has not the reasons that the Englishman has for drawing morals from, or for accepting, our historic sequences. He is aware that his own land is steeped, is rendered fertile, by the blood of man in ages past. He sees however in these matters, domestic to him, the pressure of immense necessities, the hand of an august if inscrutable Providence. But, never having been so much as momentarily moved by our national middle-class poet's dogma that English history is a matter of precedent broadening down to precedent, he cannot see that English state executions are part of an immense design. He sees instead a succession of sanguinary incidents. For let it be remembered that of the first twenty-six sovereigns who reigned in England since the Conquest no less than ten died deaths of violence; that, in addition to this, several Queens Consort, one Queen of Scotland, many rightful heirs to the throne,

and innumerable statesmen of prominence died by the hands of the headsman or the secret murderer. And what great names, what picturesque and romantic figures has that roll not included!

There is a vivid French historical monograph that puts all history as a matter of catchwords, as misleading as you will—so that Henri IV. and his period are typified by the "*poule au pot*," the Second Empire by "*l'Empire c'est la paix.*" And there are millions of observers of our present epoch who see the whole world of to-day menaced by a cloud bearing the ominous words "*l'ennemi c'est le Prussien!*" In a similar way the Romantic movement, still dominating Europe in a manner extraordinary enough, has made, for continental eyes, the whole of English history appear to be one vast, brown canvas, in which, out of the shadows, appears the block. Shadowy executioners hover in the half-lights behind brilliant queens or dark and melancholy kings—queens Flemish in looks, queens French, queens Spanish — but queens that are generally Mary Stuarts, or kings that are always Charles Stuarts, or children that are always the Princes in the Tower.

It is perhaps precisely because these dead kings of England do represent principles that they stand out so clearly in the historical imaginings of Europe, and it is perhaps because they themselves stand out so clearly, that the principles they merely represented are lost in the light of their brilliant fates. Speaking generally, we may say that in the large scheme of

things the fall of Mary Stuart was a mere episode in the great downward trend of revealed religion; that in the large scheme of things the fall of Charles Stuart was but an episode in the great rise of popular dominion, or that the murder of the princes in the Tower represented a step forward in the great theory of the English kingly history—that theory that still makes the English kingship elective. But, just because these episodes were so admirably adapted for the handling of the Humanists, who were the romantic artists and poets — for that reason the executions were the things that counted. The doomed principles that Mary or Charles or the infant Edward so picturesquely "died for"—those doomed principles of catholicism, aristocracy or "tail male"—served to make Charles, Mary and the infant Edward sympathetic figures in the eyes of a sentimentalising Europe. For, if you die for a principle you will become an attractive figure; what the principle may be does not very much matter.

But England has very largely outgrown the influence of the Romantic movement, and, living in the centre of a crowd that is generally humane beyond belief, the Englishman sees his history as a matter of a good-humoured broadening down of precedent to precedent, a broad and tranquil stream of popular advance to power in which a few negligible individuals have lost upon the block their forgotten heads. Who in England remembers that more than one in three of England's earlier kings died deaths of violence?

For, upon the whole the English crowd has grown humane beyond belief.* The other day a large dog took it into its head to lie down and fall asleep in the centre of the roadway in one of our largest and busiest thoroughfares. And it effectually blocked the way. Cabs avoided it: large motor omnibuses drove carefully round it: a great block was caused by the deflected traffic, and a great deal of time was lost. Yet the dog itself was absolutely valueless and unpresentable. And, curiously enough, I happened on the next day to witness in South London an episode almost exactly similar. A sheep, one of a flock on the way to Smithfield, had wedged itself firmly into the mechanism of an electric tram. It remained there for three-quarters of an hour, and I counted twenty-two trams all kept waiting whilst the officials of the first car endeavoured to save the life of an animal that in any case was doomed to death within the day.

These seemed to me to be singular instances of humanity on the part of a race that, at any rate in that part of its land, is remarkably in a hurry. They effaced for me much of the impression of underlying ferocity in the people—the impression that had been caused by some small sufferings at the hands of hostile mobs during a period of strife some years ago. For, upon the whole, the ferocities and barbarities of

* I do not wish to be taken as implying that the English crowd is polished, or gentle, or considerate. I have before me a newspaper article which enumerates twenty-nine distinct causes for offence given by one Bank Holiday crowd to one individual. And the estimate does not appear to be excessive.

the English crowds during the Boer war might have been matched in any part of Europe. One suffered as much, being English upon the Continent, as one suffered for being pro-Boer in this country. But I cannot well imagine in any continental city a crowd of a couple of thousand people watching with intense sympathy (or even suffering with good humour considerable inconvenience for the sake of) a sheep that was shortly to die. It is true that in any English street one may see a broken-legged horse stand for hours waiting to be put out of its agony. But that is a manifestation of official stupidity, and is upon the whole a spectacle repugnant to the feelings of the onlookers, any one of whom would approve or applaud the instant slaughtering of a poor animal.

I do not assume that these instances of humanity in English crowds distinguish the Anglo-Saxon from all his human brothers. But just because almost every Englishman will recognise the truth in them, and just because almost every Englishman will applaud the action of these tram-conductors or cab-drivers, it does seem to me to be arguable that, upon the whole, much of the ferocity that was a part of the spirit of the people has died out.

Since witnessing these two events, I have "put" them to several foreigners. It has been noticeable to me that each of these foreigners has taken the humanitarian standard of his own country to be, as it were, the normal and proper level from which to regard the brute creation—this although practically

none of them was what we should call patriotic. But each of them agreed that the instance of the sheep betrayed what they called "sentimentality;" each of them, indeed, used this very word. Even a Hindoo said that if the sheep were to be slaughtered within the hour it mattered very little whether its end came at the hands of a butcher or beneath the wheels of a tramcar; and a Frenchman, a German, and a Russian lady agreed in saying that it was absurd that so much inconvenience to human beings should have been incurred merely to save the life of a dog. No doubt, if he were asked to judge the matter in the light of pure reason, every Englishman would have agreed with them; but I think that there is little doubt that such an Englishman, if he had stood upon the kerb-stone and watched these two small dramas, would have voted life to the dog and, the sheep, or would at least have applauded these forbearances.

It happened that one of the persons to whom I put these cases was the very German student of literature to whom I referred in my first words. He, for his part, was by no means ready to admit that the English were more the friends of beasts than the inhabitants of Westphalia. He cited, for instance, the case of his brother, a landowner who possessed a favourite but very troublesome horse. This animal refused to stand in harness, with the result that every member of his brother's family who desired to take a drive was forced to spring into the cart whilst the animal was going at a sharp trot. This they had

borne with for many years. And, indeed, I myself have met with instances of foreign family coachmen who resented as autocratically as any Englishman the keeping waiting of their horses. But my German friend, whilst unwilling to admit that his compatriots fell behind our own in *reasonable* humanity, stigmatised the sparing of the dog and the sheep as part of the quite unreasonable "sentimentality" with which he credited the Anglo-Saxon race. He is my friend, by way of being Professor of English literature in a German University, and as such he is at present engaged in writing a history of Sentimentality in England. This, he seems to see, begins (at least as far as the sentimental attitude towards the brute creation is concerned) with the "Sentimental Journey" of Laurence Sterne. In this will be found the celebrated sentimentalising over the dead ass, or the still more flagrant instance of the caged starling that cried incessantly, "I can't get out!" Bishop Law, the author of the "Devout Call," was another of these sentimentalisers, inasmuch as he was unable to pass a caged bird without an attempt to purchase it and to set it at liberty.

Nothing, indeed, could be more interesting than to discover just when this humanitarian movement did really originate in the English people. For however right my German friend may be in dating the commencement of the sentimental movement in its other aspects he has certainly very much post-dated this particular strain in its birth. For Sterne, it must be

remembered, called himself Yorick. And if he had a sentimental attitude, he got it by imitation very largely of another creature of the creator of the Prince of Denmark. For most of the meditations of the "Sentimental Journey" are in the "vein" of the melancholy Jacques, and if we read through the *rôle* of that character it is not long before we come upon the tale of the

> Poor sequestered stag
> That from the hunter's aim had taken a hurt
> And came to languish . . .
> Thus the hairy fool,
> Much markèd of the melancholy Jacques,
> Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook
> Augmenting it with tears. . . .
> "Poor deer," quoth he, "thou mak'st a testament
> As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more
> To that which hath too much."
> "Tis right," quoth he, "thus misery doth part
> The flux of company."
> "Sweep on, ye fat and greasy citizens;
> 'Tis just the fashion; wherefore do ye look
> Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?"

Here is, indeed, the "note" of that sentimentalism which Sterne afterwards and so ably exploited. Another department of English sentimentalism—that which the German, with some wonder and some contempt, is apt to call the Englishman's *Natur-Schwaermerei*, his mad infatuation for nature—my friend was equally prone to find in eighteenth-century English poets. Gray's letters from Switzerland are, for instance, distinguished by rhapsodical passages of veneration for the spirit of the Alps. He finds, too, in

Horace Walpole's coquettings with the Gothic on Strawberry Hill the first indications of the modern Englishman's veneration for tradition in writings and in tone of mind. He finds, in fact, in that remarkable and only half appreciated eighteenth century of ours the first shoots of nearly all our present-day failings.

But, to anyone in touch with these tendencies, to anyone who has felt the almost sublime forgetfulness of self that the Anglo-Saxon will feel when looking at animals, at flower-filled woods, or even at old buildings or ancient ceremonials,—any Englishman, looking back through his literature will find himself stirred by echoes of the things that now stir him. He will feel that curious and indefinable flutter of sentimentalism in reading the balladists, in Herrick, in Shakespeare, in Chaucer, or right back in Orme, who wrote a Bestiary in the twelfth century. And, indeed, I am inclined to see that these things are inherent to the British Isles; that, born of the climate, the soil, and the creatures of the earth, they have arisen sooner or later in each of the races which have come to be dominant in these islands of continually changing masters.

One theory is, of course, little better than another; but for me, my private and particular image of the course of English history in these matters is one of waving lines. I see tendencies rise to the surface of the people, I see them fall again and rise again. The particular love for beasts, flowers, and even for old

buildings that the German calls in the Englishman sentimentality, appears to me to be part of an anthropomorphism, that has always been particularly characteristic, at sufficiently separated intervals, of the English inhabitant.

If the Englishman to-day loves animals it is because he sees, to some extent, in every beast a little replica of himself. Other peoples may see in a field-mouse a scientific phenomenon, or in a horse an implement meant to be used. But the Englishman sees in the little creature with beady eyes a tiny replica of himself; he "subjectivises" the field-mouse; he imagines himself tiny, filled with fears, confronted by a giant. In flowers even, to some extent, he sees symbols of his own, or his womenfolk's, chastity, boldness, and endurance, and in old buildings he recognises a quality of faithfulness, old service, and stability, that he himself aspires to possess. On this account the modern Englishman feels towards these things very definite and quite real affections.

Of all this we are sensible in English expressions of thought as they crop up down the ages. Robert Burns "subjectivised" precisely field-mice and daisies. Herrick wrote "To Daffodils" and "To Meadows," attributing to them a share of his own feelings. Shakespeare wrote of the deer what I have quoted, and he wrote:

> "The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye,
> And when she weeps, weeps every little flower
> Lamenting an enforced chastity."

And a similar anthropomorphism may be found, peering up, like the crests of waves at various periods right back into the days of Beowulf and the early Anglo-Saxon poets.

I am far indeed from saying that no other poets than the English ever loved nature. The German minnesingers came as near the spirit of ecstatic delight in a life out of doors as did even Chaucer or the man who wrote "As you Like It." But in essence, although Walther von der Vogelweide could write such a ballad as *Tandaradei*, even the minnesingers treated of nature as a collection of things that they observed — as phenomena in fact, not as part of themselves. If the effect of a green world is conveyed, the spirit which is supposed to inhabit leaves, fowls and fishes is a different one. And, roughly speaking, even this measure of delight in nature seems to have deserted the spirit of the other Germanic peoples with the minnesingers' disappearance. Nothing indeed is more interesting than to travel across a really typical English countryside in spring, with really typical German and really typical English companions. The shorn woodlands are decked with improbable bouquets of primroses; in the fields amongst the young lambs the daffodils shake in the young winds; along the moist roadsides, beneath the quicken hedges, there will be a diaphanous shimmer of cuckoo-flowers. And, as the coach rolls along there will be from the English little outcries of delight. They cast off even their man-

ners: they say: "Oh, *look!*" The Germans in the meantime stiffen a little with astonishment, a little with contempt. For the Englishmen a thousand words are singing in their ears. They are in the presence of things that *really* matter: in presence of some of the few things in which it is really legitimate to be sensuously and entirely delighted. *All* the warrants of *all* their poets are on their side. Words, words, words, tingle in their ears. All sorts of phrases—from the Bible, from Shakespeare, from Wordsworth, from Herrick—"*The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come*"; "*They flash upon that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude*"; "*When ladysmocks all silver white do tint the meadows with delight.*" A thousand quotations—and the Englishman is *the* man in the world who knows his poets, *the* man of this world who is compact of quotations—a thousand quotations are implied in his "Oh, *look!*" The Germans in the meanwhile sit a little stolid, a little sardonic, a little uncomfortable even, as I myself have felt when I have driven with Germans along a broad *chaussée* and they have burst into some folk-song. For the German has not any German quotations behind him; he hardly knows the German for daffodil, since the daffodil in German is confounded with all the other *narcissi*: he only knows that he is confronted with a foreign manifestation: with a manifestation of that *Natur-Schwaermerei* which to a German is as odd and confusing a thing as to an Englishman is the Teutonic habit of

bursting into part-songs, or the Latin foolishness of male embraces.

The Latins themselves face this particular English emotionalism with a different complexion. If they have not the English quotations to help them they have not the German's self-consciousness to hinder them. Emotional themselves, they are pleased to witness emotions, they are even anxious to understand the nature of this new emotional resource, since here is perhaps a new emotion in which they themselves may revel—so that I have myself had my own quotation caught up and repeated by a gentleman of Latin origin. He eyed my daffodils—they grew in a green bank given over to poultry, and had in consequence been fenced round with wire netting for protection—he eyed my daffodils with some non-comprehension, and then, catching my words, echoed quite enthusiastically:

"Oh! yes; yes——that come 'before the swallow dares, and take the winds of March with beauty.'"

We may, indeed, take it that the English and the German are akin in their respect for authority. If it were possible to imagine a German scientific pronouncement in favour of daffodils, considered, say, from a military or a commercial point of view—if it were theoretically possible to imagine so improbable a thing—we might well see the German, too, burst out enthusiastically over the grey-green clumps with their golden, dancing fountains of flowers. But,

whilst the German calls out for an authoritative or a scientific pronouncement, the Englishman craves a weighty phrase, a Biblical line, a something suited for "treatment" in the noble blank verse of his romantic and singular, poetic dialect. For the Englishman is very wonderfully under the domination of the "mighty line." The German might quite conceivably rhapsodise over a factory chimney: the Englishman will never see its wonderful poetic value until some poet has died after having put factory life into a new epic glorious in sound. That day may, however, never come—for who, nowadays, can hope really to compete with the English Bible, or the lyrics of Suckling?—and until something can be "quoted" in favour of the factory chimney, it is likely that the factory chimney will remain despised or openheartedly ignored. The subjection of the Englishman to the spoken word is indeed very remarkable. The German, speaking of an opponent, will use language very terrible; but once he comes to action his deeds will fall short, upon the whole, on the side of humanity. The Frenchman, on the other hand, adjusts his actions to his threats with some nicety. With the Englishman his deeds are apt to be more weighty than his words. Thus, I remember lying, on a hot and sultry day, upon a beach beside three very excellent and humane City merchants. The sea lapped the strand, the sky was very blue, and one of them (it was during the South African war) read out from his paper the announcement that the

Boer women were arriving to fight beside their husbands. The second commented, almost beneath his breath, as if it were a dismal and obscene secret:

"Oh! well; if they do that we shall have to shoot back at them."

The third said:

"Oh! yes; we shall have to treat them like the men: but we mustn't *say* so!" And all three agreed that we must not *say* so.

I return to the subject of the late war because it is the last evidence that we have of any really public ferocity latent in the English people. During that rather disagreeable period I made one or two speeches in the interests neither of Boer nor of Englishman, but of the African natives. To them it seemed to me—and it still seems so—the African continent belongs. I received on that account a certain amount of mishandling from either party. By the pro-Boers I was contemptuously silenced as an impracticable sentimentalist; by the Imperialists my clothes were torn. I witnessed, too, on the occasion of the Queen's Hall pro-Boer meeting, a certain amount of mob violence. The attitude of the crowd appeared, upon the whole, to be expressed somewhat as follows:—"Here are a lot of foreigners conspiring in our very midst to do something against our Queen and country. Here are policemen protecting them. It's a very mysterious business. Let's knock down any person in a soft hat." And they did so.

But it must be remembered that here were people acting in a great crowd, and it must be remembered that great crowds are liable to contagious madnesses. And, indeed, abroad, where I passed for an Englishman, I witnessed and suffered from more ferocity during that period than I did in England, where I passed for a pro-Boer. And upon the whole, lamentable as the patriotic excesses of crowds during that time appear nowadays to every Englishman, I am inclined to think that, by comparison with the actions of foreign crowds during similar periods, the English crowd may be called singularly lacking in ferocity.

I am anxious to guard myself from appearing to write with too great a complacency of a nationality that is more or less my own; therefore I use the words "lacking in ferocity" after having pondered over them for some time. For, from one very tenable point of view, ferocity is an attribute very proper to a crowd, since in a crowd all the human attributes, whether of humanity or of cruelty, are wrought up to their highest expression. A crowd *ought* to express itself by means of excesses; it turns its thumbs either up or down; it does not stay to reflect. Therefore we may say that a crowd of only moderate ferocity must be made up of individuals each of whom is relatively emasculated.

I am inclined therefore to think that the idea of a resort to physical violence in any extreme whatever has almost died out of the English race in the large. For, supposing that the British peoples really did

believe in the justice of their cause, the pro-Boers, the foreign, uncouth, un-English traitors to the nation, ought, in the general scale of these things, to have been visited with extreme punishment. Yet I hardly think that one organ of opinion seriously proposed that even Colonel Lynch—who was actually and in sober earnest a traitor—that even this notable rebel should be put to death. It is true that a number of British traitors, taken with arms in their hands amongst the Boer prisoners, were summarily shot in South Africa. But these episodes passed almost in secret: I imagine that the fact is hardly known even now to the majority of Englishmen; and I imagine that even during the war hardly a single Englishman would in cold blood have sanctioned those military executions.

Upon the whole, then, I should be inclined to repeat that ferocity may have passed away from the spirit of the people. We cannot, I should say, any longer seriously imagine the British people condemning its ruler to death: we cannot well picture it clamouring for the death of an unpopular Minister of the Crown. We cannot imagine these things in England, whereas in almost every continental nation some sort of physical violence is a quite conceivable resort in political differences, either on the part of peoples or of rulers. Of rulers on the Continent almost without exception, it is to be said that they will use the drawn sword to repress trifling disorders. I have myself twice seen the sword used in France and

once in Germany for the mere clearing of a public place. Upon to how great an extent lethal weapons are the instruments of government in Russia it is hardly necessary to dilate.

It is in fact, for any one really acquainted with the temper of the English crowd, difficult to imagine it really violent in action, and it is almost equally difficult to imagine its rulers violent in repression. One can, of course, never be certain that circumstances may not to-morrow arise in which over some perfectly trivial cause blood may be shed in the streets of London. But that at least is the "impression" that is left upon me after much mixing with English crowds. That a residuum of brutish violence may remain, in pockets as it were, in crannies of the slums or in police barracks, no one will care to deny who has seen London policemen make some arrests, or who has seen that most disagreeable of all sights, a South or East London crowd attempting to rescue a prisoner from the police. Nothing, indeed, can be more disagreeable to witness than either of these manifestations of street violence. The kick on the shins or the hard nudge in the ribs that a tall policeman will give to some wretched loafer seems to be skilfully and impassively designed to inflict more pain than almost any human action that one cares to figure to oneself; whilst the spectacle of the blue figure with its intent face, hemmed in shoulder high in a knot, in a drab, straight street, is, in its own particular way, as hideous and suggestive a nightmare as one

cares to figure for one's unpleasant imaginings. But in a sense both these things are excusable. Who gave the first blow in the miserable struggle that always wages between the police and the unhappy poor, it is impossible to determine. The original contest or its rights and wrongs are hidden in the impenetrable mists of an unchronicled history. Perhaps it was the first guardian of the peace who gave the first unnecessary nudge in the ribs to the first loafer; or perhaps in the first built of London courts the first loafer slipped beneath a glimmering lamp round a corner to bonnet the first policeman. Be that as it may the obscure blood feud remains—the blood feud between these lowest fringes of the public and its controllers. Probably this, too, will die away. Occasionally, as things are at present constituted, for some obscure reason, having its rise in some too virile tradition, a wave of senseless violence will rise from these depths; will rise to be called Hooliganism, or something of the sort. That the great public will hear of and will fight with as best it may, till it dies as mysteriously as it arose. Occasionally, too, some inspector will set a tradition, a standard, of brutality to the men under his charge. Of that, as a rule, the great public will never hear, but the groans that arise from the crowded and narrow courts will eventually reach the ears of the higher authorities, and the evil be mitigated by a removal or a promotion.*

* I am aware that my remarks upon the police force may be open to misinterpretation because I have had occasion to dwell upon

And indeed these things, regarded from the broad point of view of national manifestations, matter very little. For it is just in the organised forces of authority that traditions of violence must necessarily be longest preserved; and it is just to the poorest, least fed, and worst housed of the community, it is just into the darkest and deepest crannies of the body politic that the light of humanitarianism will last penetrate. Even as one can hardly imagine that the British soldiery will ever use their lethal weapons against an English crowd, so one imagines that hardly any English criminal would nowadays do anything more than say to an arresting policeman: "Oh, I'll come quietly!" One imagines, I mean, that any British Ministry would give in its demission rather than incur the responsibility of ordering soldiery to fire into an English crowd, just as one imagines that almost every English criminal is sufficiently educated to refrain from vindictively attempting — without chance of escape—to mutilate the mere instrument of justice.

brutalities. I may state that in the course of my ordinary vocations I have five times witnessed acts of what appeared to me unnecessary violence on the part of policemen. One of these latter I subsequently questioned, and he assured me that his violence was *not* unnecessary, and I believe he was right. I have twice seen policemen rather seriously mishandled by small crowds, and I have known rather well at least one quite decent "rough" whose *idée fixe* was to murder a certain member of the T division. These facts appear to me to constitute a reasonably intelligible *casus belli*, a sufficient complement and supplement.

It would be a silly performance: it would be like biting the handcuffs.

I have pursued this train of thought with some tenacity, not because it was accidentally suggested to me by my friend the German student of literature, but because it seems to me to be the most important aspect of English national life. For it must be remembered that what humanity has most to thank the English race for is not the foundation of a vast empire; the establishment of a tradition of seamanship; the leading the way into the realms of mechanical advance. It is not even for its poets that England must be thanked; it is certainly not for its love of the fine arts or its philosophies. It is for its evolution of a rule of thumb system by which men may live together in large masses. It has shown to all the world how great and teeming populations may inhabit a small island with a minimum of discomfort, a minimum of friction, preserving a decent measure of individual independence of thought and character, and enjoying a comparatively level standard of material comfort and sanitary precaution. There have been empires as great as the British; there have perhaps been naval captains as great as Nelson—though this I am inclined to doubt, since as a private confession I may set it down that for me Nelson is the one artist that England has produced. There have certainly been writers as great as Shakespeare, and musicians, painters, architects, generals, ironworkers, chemists, and even possibly mathematicians, galore

greater than any that have been produced within our Seven Seas. A nation each of whose individuals is apt to be brought to a standstill in any train of thought by the magic of a "quotation" can hardly hope to be a nation of artists, since, in the great sense, the supreme art is the supreme expression of common sense. But—in the great sense, too—life is a thing so abounding in contradictions and bewilderments that a great sense of logic is of little service to a nation whose main problem is how to live. For that purpose a mind well stored with quotations is a much better tool, and the more sounding and the more self-contradictory those quotations may be the better will be the tool.

For, upon the whole we may say that a universally used "quotation" has the weight of a proverb, and if a proverbial philosophy have little in its favour as an instrument of intellectual investigation, it is yet a very excellent aid to bearing with patience the eccentricities of our neighbours, the trials of the weather, and the tricks of fate. In dealing with his neighbour, in fact, the Englishman is singularly apt to be lacking in that imagination which is insight—and I can imagine few worse places than England in which to suffer from any mental distress, since, with the best will in the world, the Englishman is curiously unable to deal with individual cases, and every case of mental distress differs from every other. On the other hand, there are few better places in which to suffer from financial or material troubles. These the

Englishman can deal with, since they are subject, as a rule, to one or other of his maxims. He will say: "*Bis dat qui cito dat:* Heaven loves a cheerful giver;" or, "Better love can no man show than that he lay down his life for his friend." And he will do it. But for mental distress he has only: "Therein the patient must minister to himself;" or that most soul-wounding of all maxims: "There are hundreds worse off than you, my friend!"

In a sort of mathematical progression this almost ferocious lack of imagination has made, in the English race, for an almost imaginative lack of ferocity. You may set down the formula as this:— i. I do not enquire into my neighbour's psychology; ii. I do not know my neighbour's opinions; iii. I give him credit for having much such opinions as my own; iv. I tolerate myself; v. I tolerate him. And so, in these fortunate islands we all live very comfortably together.

THE ROAD TO THE WEST.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROAD TO THE WEST.

ENGLAND, almost more than any other, is the land that has been ruled by foreigners, yet the Englishman, almost more than any other man, will resent or will ignore the fact that his country has ever been subjected. Confronted with this proposition, he will at once produce his quotation from Shakespeare:

> "This England never did nor never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror . . ."

And he will believe it; and in the fact, and in its being ignored, may be found the true sources of English greatness. Almost every continental race—and at least one Asiatic race—can take a kindly interest in English territory, because almost every continental race of importance can say: "At one time we conquered England." French, Latin, German, Dutch, Scot, Welshman—all can say it. Even the Spaniards can say, "Once a King of Spain was King of England." But if you put these facts to an Englishman, he may confess to their truth in the letter. Nevertheless, he

will say that, in the spirit, these allegations are untrue, unfair, un-English, in short; and "the letter," he will quote, "killeth." Approaching the matter more nearly he will say: "All these fellows *are* 'ourselves.' We, being English, have swallowed them up. We have digested them. It is, as it were, true that they conquered us; but they conquered us not because they were foreigners, but because they were predestined to become Englishmen." The facts concerning the component factors of the Englishman's greatness are so bizarre and so varied, that only that one generalisation can embrace them all. Thus the greatest of all Englishmen was of Danish extraction: the most singular, the most popular and most diversely gifted—the most appealing of all England's real rulers during the nineteenth century was a Jew. These facts are such truisms that it seems hardly pertinent to bring them into a serious page; the Englishman blinks them with his formula, "All these fellows *are* ourselves." Yet these facts are so important to a comprehension of the Spirit of this People, of its greatnesses and its weaknesses, that no knot in a handkerchief could ever be sufficiently large to keep them in our memories. It is not merely for the achievements of those men, important though they were, that these facts should be remembered in this conjunction. It is for the hold that Nelson and Disraeli had over the popular imagination. And it is part of the same train of thought that brings one to the consideration of the reverse of the medal.

For, if the attraction of a foreign figure is really enormous for the Englishman, the attraction of England and the English spirit for the foreigner is almost as startling. Once he becomes, by means of papers, a British subject, your Chinaman, Russian, or Portuguese is, more than any Englishman, ready and anxious to asseverate, "I am an Englishman." I have seldom been more embarrassed than when travelling in foreign countries with such persons; their unwillingness to conform to continental habits; their recalcitrance in the face of ticket collectors, waiters, guides to monuments, and all the other constituted authorities is singular and troublesome; and, in the other department of life, I can imagine few agonies of injured innocence, quite equal to that of a boy of foreign extraction at an English school. At times he will get called "Frenchy" or "dirty German." This will not happen very often, perhaps, because the English boy, like the English man, is ready to accept for his particular small republic the services of all and sundry. I remember being at school with an African prince, who was a fast bowler of formidable efficiency. With enormous arms and the delivery of a windmill he sent down a ball that, to myself usually keeping the wickets, was for the five minutes or so of an over a thing to be almost deprecated. It was power for our side, but embarrassing for myself.

In the last match that he played in he took seven of the wickets for thirty-two runs, and in the second

innings six for twenty. Our victory was signal. But I never forgot the injured innocence of our side when we were faced with the remonstrance that it was not sporting to have the aid of a "foreigner." I remember very well saying: "He's been to our school. It isn't even as if he were a Frenchy or a Dutchman."

The singularity of my own racial position brought me at that moment to a standstill. But the rest of my team took up the parable for me. We felt intensely English. There was our sunshine, our "whites," our golden wickets, our green turf. And we *felt*, too, that Stuart, the pure-blooded Dahomeyan, with the dark tan shining upon his massive and muscular chest, was as English as our pink-and-white or sun-browned cheeks could make us. It may have been this feeling only, a spirit of loyalty to one of our team. But I think it was deeper than this. It was a part of the teachings engendered in us by the teachings of the history of the British Islands: it was a part of the very spirit of the people. We could not put it more articulately into words than, "He's been to *our* school." But I am almost certain that we felt that that training, that contact with our traditions, was sufficient to turn any child of the sun into a very excellent Englishman. In our history, as we had confronted its spirit, a touch of English soil was sufficient to do as much for William the Norman, who, though we call him a Conqueror, seems to most English boys eminently more English than the Anglo-Saxon who was weak enough to get shot in the eye.

Similarly, for the English boy, the French Plantagenets, the Welsh Tudors, the Scotch Stuarts, the Hanoverian Guelphs, and even Dutch William—all these kings became "English" the moment they ruled in England. I know very well that that was the "impression" that the study of English history left upon the mind of the English boy of my date.

Looking back upon the remarkable process now, it is a little difficult for me to reconstitute the gradual development of this singular, but none the less veracious, Historic Spirit. When I read the erudite and almost puzzling "Child's History of England" that one of my own daughters reads for her private delectation, I am apt to be a little puzzled to pick up the string. In this particular work—its circulation is almost incredible—I see groups of facts, groups of maps, groups of engravings, but I do not see anywhere a trace of the great English Theory. Here are facts about the conditions of serfs under the great abbeys; maps of England under the Angevin kings; admirable engravings of rose-nobles; of pre-Reformation church ornaments, even of Gothic homesteads. But I do not quite see how my own children, who by blood are more English than myself, are to become so violently English as was I myself in spirit at the age of, let us say, sixteen. That they will do so, I do not much doubt; and I do not much doubt that they will do so along much the same road as that taken by myself and my comrades.

Our serious impressions of English history began,

of course, with the Conquest—began, I should imagine for most of us, with the excellent "Mrs. Markham," of which I remember only the name. Without doubt, before the Conquest there was, for most of us, too, "Little Arthur," of which I can remember only a shadowy form of small books in yellow, shiny linen covers, that curled backwards in the fingers. "Little Arthur," I imagine, most of us confused with the small prince, son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, who died a pathetic, anecdotal death. "Little Arthur" *had* made us dimly acquainted with the fact that there had been in England, before the dark wall of the Conquest, some sort of fairy-tale population of the British Isles. There had been, for instance, a King Alfred who burned cakes. But he and his contemporaries were, for us, precisely figures of fairy-tales, perhaps because his adventure with the cakes formed one of those anecdotes that we heard along with the tales of Giant Blunderbore and the other engrossing projections of English nursery life. These died away as soon as we went to "school."

History began with 1066. And the Normans being the first rulers of England that we heard of became for us the first Englishmen. That territorial fact did perhaps have the greatest influence over our minds. These things took place in England; this was a history of England; therefore it was a history of Englishmen. So the Normans were the first Anglo-Saxons we became acquainted with. They were the first to be successful: to conquer against great odds

—they were the first to show the true genius of the race. (I fancy that that remains the "note" of adult England of the present day. I put the question to a very typical Englishman with whom I entered into conversation yesterday during a prolonged railway journey. He said: "Well, of course, the Anglo-Saxons were a sort of German, weren't they?") And, indeed, when later we came at school to learn that there were English before 1066, we really did regard these Anglo-Saxons as a sort of German—not a modern, efficient, Prussianised German, but a pale, disorganised, ineffectual population. They were always being harried by the Danes; they had not really "settled" the Danes' war when, just before the battle of Hastings, Harold defeated Harold Harfager at Stamford Bridge. And I fancy that most of us regarded the Romans as being infinitely more "English" than the Britons, in spite of Cassivellaunus and Boadicea, who being a woman did not really count. For, after all, Cæsar did the sort of thing that every English boy imagines himself doing.

The really tragic incident of my youngest days was a Homeric battle which I fought on a piece of waste ground. It was really tragic because it made me acquainted with the fact that, even in England, fate was unjust: fate was on the side of the big battalions. There was at my small school a red-haired, hard-headed Irish boy called R—, with a freckled nose. We had been learning history: we

heard how Julius Cæsar had invaded Britain. The snow lay on the ground. So that when playtime came we divided into two sections, the less fortunate boys being the Britons. (There was, after all, something un-English about these Britons: perhaps that is why, though few Englishmen resent being called Britishers by their cousins across the water, every Englishman dislikes being lumped, along with Scots, Irish, Welsh, and the inhabitants of the town of Berwick-on-Tweed, as "British." For the British were beaten, the English never have been.) Now R— insisted that I should be Caractacus: I was equally determined to be Cæsar. We fought: I was beaten—and I *was* Caractacus. So far so good. But the battle continued for three whole months. At the end of that time I beat R—. It was then my turn to be Cæsar. But alas! R— called in to his aid his brother—his big brother from another school.

I fought him on that waste ground. I feel to this day the passionate distention of my chest; and to this day, at moments of stress, when fate has played me some evil trick, my eyes wander round upon the passionless and inscrutable surfaces of the material world, and I feel the hot rage that then I felt to be lurking at the backs of grim and unfinished houses. I stood up, I was knocked down: I stood up, I was knocked down. I lay in bed for a whole week afterwards. It was not because of my injuries, but because of my passionate rebellion against fate. For I was doomed to remain a Briton, as it seemed,

to the end of my days. That at least was the promise—the dreadful oath—extracted from me by the big brother of R—, an Irishman, a Celt, descendant, no doubt, of Caractacus; but one who aspired to be, for the remainder of *his* days, a Roman. I had not fought for so long because I expected to win by mere force: I was not rebellious against fate because the boy who slogged into my poor chest and poor jaws was so much bigger. Being English one expects to fight against odds. But, being English too, one expects Providence to intervene for one. Providence, after all, always ought to intervene for the English. And, gazing round upon that black and desolate waste ground, I had, I know, been expecting in some sort of dim way that night, or Blucher, or Minerva, or an earthquake—one of the miraculous aids by which Providence manifests itself, one of the providential assistants that an Englishman has a right to expect—that *something* would come to the aid of me, an Englishman who had not more than a few drops of really English blood in my veins. . . . .

Our more protracted studies of history may perhaps a little have blurred the figures of our mental puppet plays. But the principle remained undimmed in its radiant effulgence. The Jews remained Englishmen: was not Jehovah for them? Did they not smite Egyptians, Assyrians, Philistines—all the Gentiles who were really French or Germans? The Conqueror remained English too—and the Normans.

But "Ivanhoe" changed the aspect of the case: we read it all together with a fury of enthusiasm for the "English" of that book. But somehow the Normans, Front de Bœuf and the rest, were not *the* Normans. The Providence of the Romancer was not on their side: the mysterious current, the elixir, the fluid, the guiding light which makes all blows strike home, all arrows pierce the casque—*that* was on the side of the Disinherited Knight and all his followers. *They* were the English in spirit. Even Rebecca was English.

And so we went our way through English history. If we lost the French dominions it was because it was providentially designed. Joan of Arc beat us in order that our kings might pay more attention to domestic matters—and, after all, Joan of Arc, that splendid, shining and original figure, was, in spirit, an Englishwoman. And the Stuarts, Dutch William, and the Hanoverian sovereigns, were they not predestined to become English? It is true that they were born in foreign lands—but that only made the principle the more singularly demonstrable. Was it not, too, providential that England lost the North American colonies when she did? Was not even Washington an Englishman? And Lafayette? I am sure that each of us boys would have answered each of these questions with a sparkling and unanimous "Yes!"

And the influence of such teaching, of such a careful and deeply-penetrating system of thought,

upon the opening minds of a generation—or of how many generations?—must have been inestimable and far-reaching beyond conception. Personally I look at the world with different eyes nowadays—but at the back of those eyes the old feeling remains. Still for me William, who landed at Pevensey in the year of our Lord 1066, was the first Englishman to touch British soil since Julius Cæsar's day. And still, for me, the loss of the North American colonies is the crowning mercy. No doubt, too, for the vast majority of those who were at school in my days—for the great majority of the English people—the history of these islands presents itself in that light still. To what extent the modern, comparatively scientific breath of thought that has crept over England since the days of Darwin may have modified these pre-conceptions, or may have altered the methods of approaching the English race problem as it affects the teaching of history to children, I can hardly tell. But the other day I travelled along a branch line: in my carriage were six members of a grammar school fifteen going to play a proprietary school in a neighbouring town. Their frequent reference to one of their masters as "Chaucer"—(he was the father of two boys who had written verses in the school magazine)—led me to question one or two of them. They were "doing" the Angevin kings for some examination. And there were all my old beliefs brought back to me in a flood. It was not so much the fact that a spectacled boy in a muddy cap told

me that the possession of French dominions by the kings of England "exercised a deleterious influence" upon domestic affairs—so that it was a jolly good job we lost them.

I asked: "Were not the first Angevin kings English?" and got the answer that they jolly well were. I asked: "Did they become, more or less, English when French was not their language any longer?" and I got the answer: They were jolly well English when they came, they supposed, and they were jolly well English when they learned to speak English. Anyhow, the French they spoke was an English French, not a French French. That was what you jolly well meant by the French of Stratford-atte-Bow. As for the subject race—the scientist's real Anglo-Saxons—the people who had been there before the Angevins, they were English too. They were *all* English.

A rather silent boy, who had been cutting his initials on the door of the carriage, volunteered the following sentences for the enlightenment of my excessive dulness:—

"It was like this. You and the lady with you were in the train at B——. Well: you were third-class passengers on this silly line. We six got in at A——. Well: now we're all third-class passengers together on the rotten line, and I wish we could jolly well get somewhere where they sell ginger-beer."

The sentence seems to prove that the old spirit has not died out of the English schoolboy people; and,

inasmuch as the people seldom troubles to revise its schoolboy judgments once it has passed adolescence, it may be taken for granted that that spirit remains to most of the people at the present day. It seems to me, that sentence, to sum up very admirably the attitude of our population towards itself. It is not—the whole of Anglo-Saxondom—a matter of race but one, quite simply, of place—of place and of spirit, the spirit being born of the environment. We are not Teutons; we are not Latins; we are not Celts or Anglo-Saxons in the sense of being descendants of Jutes or Angles. We are all passengers together, carving or not carving our initials on the doors of our carriage, and we all vaguely hope as a nation to jolly well get somewhere. How we look at our line, whether we style it a rotten line or a good one, depends very much upon the immediate state of our national self-consciousness. But, in a dim way too, we do hope that we shall jolly well get somewhere where they sell ginger-beer.

I am inclined to doubt that the Englishman—whether we consider him nationally or in that sort of composite photograph that for us is the typical individual—to doubt that the Englishman, as far as these matters are concerned, ever gets much beyond the schoolboy's point of view. I have used already the word anthropomorphic in regard to the Englishman's attitude towards the brute creation; I am inclined to repeat it in regard to his way of looking at other races. He regards himself as the one proper man, but, possessed

of a sense of modesty, he cannot rule all the other races out of the human category. An ordinary foreigner is, of course, hardly a man; but as soon as a people does something fine, the Englishman is inclined to hold out to it the hand of kinship. I am sure, for instance, that the English of the middle nineteenth century regarded Garibaldi as an Englishman.

At the risk of being thought paradoxical, I will venture to say that this attitude of the Englishman is not only philosophically true, but is even historically correct, for in the case of a people so mixed in its origins as is the race inhabiting the most fertile, the most opulent, and the most pleasant parts of these islands—in the case of a people descended from Romans, from Britons, from Anglo-Saxons, from Danes, from Normans, from Poitevins, from Scotch, from Huguenots, from Irish, from Gaels, from modern Germans, and from Jews, a people so mixed that there is in it hardly a man who can point to seven generations of purely English blood, it is almost absurd to use the almost obsolescent word "race." These fellows are all ourselves to such an extent that in almost every English family, by some trick of atavism, one son will be dark, broad-headed, and small, another blonde, and huge in all his members; one daughter will be small and dark, with ruddy glints in her hair when the sun shines, with taking "ways," and another indeed a daughter of the gods, tall and divinely fair. There is possibly a west of London population of these giants, but there is also an east of London

population—(let us at least say so for the sake of argument, in order to frame some sort of theory with which we may agree or from which we may differ); there is an east of London population which is small, dark, vigorous and gentle. In the natural course of things this eastern population will rise in the scale, will cross London, will besiege the palaces, will sit in the chairs and will attain to the very frames of mind of these tranquil giants. We cannot nowadays say of what race are either the giants or the small dark men, still less will the sociologist of the future be able to pronounce upon the origins of that mixed dominant race that shall be. The Englishman is then uttering a philosophical truism, a historical platitude, when he says his "All these fellows are ourselves;" and he is uttering other platitudes and truisms when he says that Joshua the son of Nun, or Garibaldi, were Englishmen. For what he means, more precisely stated, is that circumstances, environment, the hand of destiny if you will, have given him a share of the spirit of those apparently unrelated and irreconcilable peoples. For if there be no Anglo-Saxon race, there is in the population of these islands a certain spirit, a spirit of human fallibility, of optimism, of humanity, of self-deception, a spirit of a thousand finenesses, of a thousand energies, of some meannesses, and of many wrong-headednesses—a spirit which I am very willing to call English, but which I am more than loth to style Anglo-Saxon.

So many things have gone to these makings—the

fertility of the land, the pleasantness of the climate, the richness of its minerals, the spirit of security given to it by its encircling seas. For invaders of England have seemed to see in the land not only communities that they may sack, but a stronghold in which they may maintain themselves, their goods, and their sovereignties. And this dream of theirs seems, indeed, well warranted, since the Norman invaders held England but lost Normandy, the Angevins held England but lost Anjou, and even the Hanoverian Guelphs hold England still whilst Hanover has been wrested from their house by a formidable and predatory race. But it seems to me that almost more its position than its desirability has made England what it is. If in the eyes of the Englishman England be a home, in the eyes of the whole world England is almost more, a goodly inn, a harbourage upon a westward road. Just as you will find upon one of the shores from which birds of passage take their flight advanced islets, rocks, or shingle-banks, where for the moment swallows and finches will rest in their thousands, so you may see England a little island lying off the mainland. And upon it the hordes of European mankind have rested during their secular flights westward in search of the Islands of the Blest. If they have succeeded only in founding a "race" more mingled, more ungraspable, a race that is a sort of pluperfect English race, a race to whom no doubt the future belongs; if, instead of finding a classical ideal, they have only founded a very modern

and very inscrutable problem, that fact must be regarded rather as a comment upon the proneness of humanity to fall short of its ideals than as a refutation of the convenient image that England is a road, a means to an end, not an end in itself.

For it is, I think, a fact that even the most hardened Anglo-morphist, the English schoolboy with the very largest race appetite, will not dare to regard the American people as in any sense English. The great northern half-continent cannot, even by a vast figure of speech, be regarded as a morsel too large to chew. It is simply a sphere so great that the most distended jaw cannot begin to bite upon it. Whatever we may think that Napoleon Buonaparte *ought* to have been, we do not even commence to imagine that General Grant was an Englishman. Perhaps Stonewall Jackson may have been.

The American in his turn well returns that compliment. There is no American Historic Theory to make the Duke of Wellington appear to be a "Yankee." I doubt whether, much though American histories belaud him, Governor Spottiswoode can be regarded as an American. For, upon the whole, the spirit of the American Historic Theory is as exclusive as is that breathed in our island schools. But a certain parallel between these theories is observable. Thus, on the east of the Anglo-Saxon ocean history begins suddenly at 1066: on the west it begins with the shots fired at Bunker's Hill. On the east, before the dawn there was a night in which there moved pale

Anglo-Saxons: on the west there was a crepuscular period in which there lived the colonists. And just as, before the Anglo-Saxons there had been the Romans who were really English, so before the colonial days there had been a truly American race—the Pilgrim Fathers. But there, upon the whole, the parallel ceases.

For the English, having a distinguished history of their own, find it most agreeable to regard the history of the United States as a thing practically non-existent. The Englishman will tell you that he never really had much to do with "America"; the American, on the other hand, will tell you that he flogged the Englishman.

On the one hand, the United States have a singular kinship with England of the Spirit. Its peaceful invaders, coming in their millions to seek castles in Spain, become almost more violently American than naturalised English become English; but, on the other hand, they do not seem to acquire, once they are fused into the body of the people, the English faculty of considering themselves one with foreign nations. Upon the whole, the American is insular "all through": the Englishman is insular only in regard to his clothes, his eatables, and his furniture. There is, of course, an excellent reason for this: the English people is very well aware that it is, along its own lines, as nearly perfect as a people can be; I mean that it breeds true to type. Thus there is, in a corner of Kent and Sussex, a certain stretch of

marsh-land. Here all the sheep are Kent sheep; good, heavy, serviceable, not very fine-bred animals. Now, if you introduce upon this stretch of territory sheep of other breeds—Southdowns, Wensleydales, Blackfaces, or what you will—you may be certain that, as the years go on, in a few generations the progeny of these sheep will so assimilate themselves to the Kent sheep, that they will become Kent sheep. Thus the problem before the Kent and Sussex breeder is not to keep his flocks pure, but rather to attempt to modify them by the introduction of foreign blood.

Speaking psychologically, that problem is before the English people. It does not need, in its own view, to trouble its head to keep the race pure. The climate, the tradition, the school, will do that. The children of any Wallachian will become as English as the children of any Lincolnshire farmer, so that, at times, an uneasy wave passes across the English people. A few years ago, for instance, the whole country was crying out for the Prussianisation of our schools, our armies, our laboratories, because "we are a nation of amateurs." But the problem before the United States, the problem present always in the consciousness of the American nation, is precisely that of producing a pure type. Without any secular traditions, without any homogeneity of climate, of soil, or of occupation, the American has not yet been able to strike any national average. Upon the whole, the Englishman of to-day is very much akin to the Englishman of early Victorian days; but the

American, *Consule* Roosevelt, is almost a different animal from the American who sought, say, to impeach President Johnson; and certainly the American of to-day is unrecognisable as a descendant of those who were caricatured by Charles Dickens.

We seem to arrive here at two contradictory facts. It would appear that, on the one hand, the island upon the west of Europe existed solely as a half-way house towards the western continent. Yet, in face of this, it breeds, this island, a population whose sons come singularly true to type. But, contradictory as these facts may seem, it will appear, as soon as they are examined closely, that they are facts belonging to two different planes of thought—that, as it were, to say that the ball is round does not contradict the statement that the ball is white. And these seeming contradictions may be drawn in a hundred different and startling ways. Thus nowhere in the world, so much as in England, do you find the spirit of the home of ancient peace; nowhere in the occidental world will you find turf that so invites you to lie down and muse, sunshine so mellow and innocuous, shade so deep or rooks so tranquil in their voices. You will find nowhere a *mise-en-scène* so suggestive of the ancient and the enduring as in an English rose-garden, walled in and stone pathed, if it be not in an English cathedral close. Yet these very permanent manifestations of restfulness were founded by the restless units of European races, and these English rose-gardens and cathedral closes breed

a race whose mission is, after all, to be the eternal frontiersmen of the world.

These paradoxes reconcile themselves immediately at the touch of one simile or another. We may, that is to say, reconcile ourselves to the dictum of the Chinese Commission that lately visited our shores: they stated that we had grown too slumbrous, too slow, too conservative, to be safely imitated by a renascent Oriental Empire. But, if we put it that these rose-gardens and cathedral closes are, as it were, the manifestations of the pleasantness and fulness that attend the digestion of a very sufficient meal, these dark places become plain. Assuredly, the various individuals who took these great dinners had huge appetites—and, equally assuredly, those huge appetites will remain to their descendants once the phase of digestion is over. The English nation, that is to say, cannot have been made up of all the "bad eggs" of Europe since the dark ages without retaining the bad-egg tendency in a degree more marked than is observable in any continental nation.

For, philosophically regarded, that is one of the two great lessons of English history. Like the Romans, the English are not a race: they are the populations descended from the rogues of a Sanctuary —of a Sanctuary that arose not so much because it was holy, as because it was safe or because it was conquerable. All through the ages it has attracted precisely the restless, the adventurous, or the outcast. The outcast were precisely those who did not

get on well with their folk at home; the adventurous were those who were not satisfied with the chances offered to them at home; the restless were the men who could never settle down. The descendants of these last have, perhaps many of them, passed already further west. They may be the eternally unquiet gold-diggers of South America, the beach-combers of the South Seas, the hoboes of the United States, the Jameson raiders, or the mere casuals of our workhouses. But the children of the adventurous and the outcast remain with us: they are you, I, and our friends—young Carruthers, the parson's son, who was no good at home and died, shot through the head, at Krugersdorp; or our other friend, Murray, who suddenly threw up his good post of land-steward to go out, heaven knows why! to Argentina. He will, they say now, die dictator of the whole South American Pacific railway system.

If we go impressionistically through the history of South Britain, we see how true, impressionistically speaking still, is this particular view. We might almost stretch the theory further, and say that England is the direct product of successive periods of unrest in the continental peoples. For want of a better terminology we may adopt the language of the Race Theorist, and say that we know practically nothing of the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain. We cannot nowadays trace in England any type corresponding to the Digger Indians of North America—corresponding to those unfortunate cave-dwelling,

mud-eating beings who are said to have been driven into their holes and fastnesses by the triumphant Iroquois or their rival races. Interested observers—observers, that is, who are interested in race theories—will, however, tell you that in various parts of England, most notably in Wiltshire around Stonehenge, they find a dark-haired, dark-eyelashed, mysterious, romantic child, who, in their view, represents the new outcropping of a never extinct, aboriginal race. Now, they say, that at last the English race has become an admixture, comparatively stable, of the continentals, the aboriginal, non-continental race is about to assert its permanence; it will gradually increase by force of atavism until it have swallowed up all us descendants of blonde, red, dark or tawny peoples. But that is still very much stuff of dreams and visions; even yet we cannot say what visaged children of men made the great escarpments on the side of Whitesheet Hill. We cannot say what manner of men were our aborigines whom, by so many relays, we have displaced.

Even the original displacers, Gauls, Gaels, Goidels, Celts, or what you will, are legendary to us; we know neither whence they came, nor whither really they wended. In a vague way we know that a horde of barbarians, dominated more or less by a myth styled "Brennus," issued, innumerable, wild, and desolating, from the gloomy forests of Central Europe. They sacked, doubtless, Rome; they passed perhaps into Spain; it is said that they overran Hellas and

despoiled the temple of the Pythic oracle. They found a home, permanent enough, in the very east of the mainland, and other homes, permanent enough, in the western parts of our islands. But across England they were fated to go, if with delaying footsteps. They found, in fact, no home, but an hotel; and though we cannot any more tell what particular kind of unrest it was that drove them forth from their hiding-place, we may be very certain that it was some kind of psychological or material pressure that forced out from the Central European forests these, the adventurous, the outcast, or the restless of an immense people. It was, again, a national unrest that sent hither the first Cæsar and his troops. They in their day were the troublesome populations of a Rome that was in a state of ferment, constitutional and psychological. It is well not to drive a theory too far, so that we may refrain from taking the view that the governors that Rome sent to Britain during the stable Imperial era were men of unrest whom the Emperors wished to send to the ends of the earth. Indeed, we might well draw a contrary moral from the story of the Roman occupancy of these islands, for it was perhaps precisely because the Romans who held Britain were more or less conscripted soldiers, that the Roman period of dominance left so little trace upon the English peoples. But it remains a fact, observable enough to-day, that a colony administered by men who are sent, has very little chance of per-

manence in comparison with one founded by men who choose to go. In that fact we may perhaps see the secret of the British Empire: it is certainly the secret of "England."

The Angles, in turn, were men of unrest and of adventure; the Danes, who harried them, were even so, and the Northmen, who finally conquered them, were the offscourings, the adventurous overmen of those very Scandinavians whose unrest had peopled the northern parts of France. And, roughly speaking, we may say as much of the Angevins, and the Stuarts with their hordes of Scots. It is, of course, less true of the Dutch that came with William III., or of the Hanoverian kings.

The tide of armed invasion did actually stop with the Angevins, and by the time of Shakespeare, England might well, to a poetic imagination, present the appearance of an island whose foot spurns back the ocean's rolling tide that coops from other lands her islanders. At that date England had very victoriously passed through a phase of alarums and excursions; she might well boast of being throned inviolable in the west; she had survived all the projects for invasion of the reign of Henry VIII., projects founded in all Europe during fifty years, to culminate in the crowning defeat of the Armada. But that very period of the Elizabethans was in itself a time of Continental unrest that brought to English shores a new tide of invasion; it brought to us all those bad eggs who, beginning with the Anabaptists from

Münster—the city from which my friend, the Professor of Literature, surveyed our race—culminated with the Huguenots, who have meant so much for England.

England, indeed, that seemed so stable a nest to the past of the race, was already beginning to assume more definitely the aspect of a hospice on the long road to a western Atalantis. And it is significant that, a few years after the writing of the phrase "coops from other lands her islanders," England herself, approaching a period of unrest, exported to the other shores of the Sea of the British Empire, her first shiploads of "bad eggs." For it was not a generation before the Pilgrim Fathers set sail.

From that time onwards England assumed more or less definitely her character of a road to the ultimate west. Thus, in any history of the United States, we may read that such and such a State was founded by the restless people of France, who, having tried Flanders for a home, tried England, and finding no home in England, sailed westward.

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THE MELTING POT.

CHAPTER III.

THE MELTING POT.

IN my two previous chapters I have drawn attention to two facts—or, let me put it more exactly, to two aspects that most have struck me in the corporate manifestations of the history of the population of England. Let me now add a third strand to the plait of theories that I offer to my reader. In my first chapter I put the proposition that the chief value of England to the world was that it had shown the nations how mankind, composed as it is of differing individualities, might, with a sort of rule-of-thumb agreeableness, live together in great congeries. And this indeed — if one may be pardoned for drawing morals from one's own projections—is the moral that I should draw from my previous book, the first of this series. In my second chapter I have attempted to make plain a view of England as a resting-place of humanity in its road westward. And this, indeed, if I am allowed to draw a further moral from a further projection, is the one that I should draw from the second work of this

series. For in that, if any generalisation stands out for me, it is: that the English field-labourer is throwing down his tools and abandoning his master's acres. What has hitherto been regarded as the staple of the population, the stable units of all peoples, appears to me to be reverting once more to the order of restless people.* This, of course, is no very new cry, nor is it a very modern phenomenon. It was to be observed, for instance, in the time of Henry VIII., just before the disestablishment of the monasteries. Such a displacement of the population has always been attended by great changes in the psychology of the people; but for the moment it is not convenient to enter minutely into the question of whether the change in the psychology is caused by the movement of the population. Nor, for the moment, is it my purpose to attempt to settle, even in my own view, whether this change in the basis of population is for good or for evil in the future of the people. The general opinion is that it makes for what is called degeneration; but it behoves every thinking man to question the general opinion. In my book upon a Town I have pointed out that the one problem before the people is the evolution of a

* I wish again, and very emphatically, to draw attention to the fact that these pages embody only my personal views, founded upon facts that have come under my personal acquaintanceship. This facet of the rural cramping, this phenomenon of depopulation of the country districts was, for instance, denied *in toto* by a writer in the "Academy," who cited against me the fact that Major Poore's small holdings at Winterslow were attracting many settlers.

healthy town type. In the second book of this series I have laid stress upon the fact that the other problem of the people is the retaining, or the attracting, of a sufficient population upon the land. But in this thorny and difficult question it is as easy to find consolation as to grow depressed. It depends largely upon one's temperamental or temporary obsessions.

To the man whose ideal is a dense rural population the gradual shifting of countrymen to towns, and thence to other lands, is a race nightmare. Population, he will say, tends invariably to decrease in the towns: philoprogenitiveness decays in the cities. Nevertheless he may find comfort in the thought that the present type of a city life is not necessarily permanent. A townsman may very conceivably be evolved ready to increase and multiply. I was in a country inn the other day and a commercial traveller came in to lunch. He was so worried with these questions (he "travelled in" a kind of lace that is used principally for decorating infants' clothes) that, finding me disinclined to talk, he must needs utter his terrors to the waiter, who stood fidgeting with the dish-cover in his hand. Said the commercial traveller:

"Have you read what Roosevelt says?"

The waiter said: "No, sir."

"Well, what I say is this" (the traveller punctuated his words with heaps of cabbage): "what we want is alliance with America. What's the good of the

entente cordiale? We haven't any use for learning the ways of Frenchmen whose birth-rate is declining."

The waiter uttered "No, sir," shuffled his feet in his pumps, and, pretending to hear a call from the bar, whisked from the door.

"Here am I unmarried," the traveller fixed me. "Now why?" And, after a pause in which I said nothing, he continued: "Because the birth-rate's low! How can I afford a wife?"

I suggested that, in that way, he too contributed to lower the birth-rate.

"There you have it," he said. "Now the interest that I represent employs some of the best men in the country. You'd be astonished if you knew the brain that there is in the fine white linen trade. Well, *they* can't afford to marry either. So there you have the straight tip. The best men can't afford to marry because the birth-rate's low, and the birth-rate's low because the best men can't afford to marry, and so old England's going to rack and ruin!" He went on to revile Malthus.

But, without going to the full length of the commercial traveller, we may, for the sake of argument, set it down that some sort of depopulation is taking place, and that this depopulation is bad for the English people. Let me, against this picture of gloom, hasten to set down a counterbalancing theory of a more cheerful kind.

I lately tried to have made for my private guidance composite likenesses of the leading spirits of several

English centuries. The attempt failed because of the great difficulty I had in finding assimilable portraits of the ages that had preceded the era of photography. But what I wished to prove to my private satisfaction was this:

It may be granted for the sake of argument, that the psychology of the civilised world changes—that the dominant types of the world alter with changing, if mysterious, alternations in the economic or social conditions of the races. I have had it put to me that the modern world began with the discovery of methods of working metal in great quantities—that, in fact, the machine has rescued us from the dark ages. That is a view like another. If for the moment we adopt it, it will then become obvious that the nation that will best survive the struggle for existence is the nation that shall contain the largest number of individuals fitted to administer, to manufacture and to develop machines—that that nation will eventually control, for the time being, the resources of the world. My own personal view—which is no doubt as idiosyncratic as that of my friend who favoured me with his view of a machine age—or my own personal preference has led me to see that the modern world began with the discovery of the balance of power as an international factor. Others, again, will say that the modern world is the product of the printing press, or of the fore-and-aft rig in ships—a very powerful factor. And yet another view will have it that the real modern world began only with the evolution of

the theory of the survival of the fittest, or with the discovery of the commercial value of by-products. All these things are merely convenient systems of thought by which a man may arrange in his mind his mental image of the mundane cosmogony—or they may be systems of thought by which he is able to claim for his particular calling, craft or art, the status of the really important factor in life. Whether we style our present age, or any previous age, the Machine, the Balance of Power, the Schooner, the By-product or the Press Age is immaterial enough—the fact arising out of this mist of conflicting ideals is that in the history of the world as among man there have always been psychological ages.

It remains then one other platitude, which I hasten to repeat, that in any given age the nation having the largest number of individuals most fitted to deal with the peculiar circumstances of that age—that nation will be the one on the top of the market. In an Ice Age, in fact, Esquimaux will have an immense advantage. There is one profound truth that the English people has always taken for granted—along with that other truth that Providence is upon our side. In periods of trial and national stress we have always the comfortable conviction that somehow we shall muddle through. And somehow we do, in a way that almost invariably works for our material advantage. If, in fact, an Ice Age did supervene, we might be pretty certain that the Esquimaux would have a great immediate advantage. England would be horribly

discomposed; all sorts of reputations would be hopelessly marred. But somehow, one man, coming probably from the very bottom of our particular basket, would arise among us; would teach us how to set a glass roof all over England—how to turn the land into a vast hothouse. Incidentally, too, he would probably give us the chance of roofing in, say, half Sweden or the whole of Africa, so that either as investors or as a nation, we should profit very materially. Wherever, in short, the sun did set, its last rays would shine upon a roof of glass, that upon the map could be comfortably coloured with red amidst the white of those polar nights, engulfing the other nations. We might have begun pretty badly; we should be certain to end more than moderately well.

This, of course, is a fanciful projection, but it does figure a national characteristic. It means that we believe that somewhere in the back of our people, in the great middle class, in the aristocracy, or in the submerged tenth, there are to be found men—the one man—fitted to deal with any emergency. And, if we consider our history and our composition as a people, we may find comforting assurance that this view is at least reasonably to be justified.

We begin our campaigns, military, economic or moral, always rather badly. The other nation, our adversary, is almost invariably in a stronger position. The age will be either a French, a German, a Spanish or a Portuguese Age; and the other nation being

truer to type will, in the immediate present, be able to overwhelm us. We shall have to go through a number of domestic revolutions before we shall be fitted even to begin to face the problem, whatever it may be. We are, for reasons to which I will refer later, the nation of vested interests and of established reputations, so that before we can really get to work we have to shake off always an immense number of ancient generals, admirals, agriculturists or textile manufacturers who have grown into a rut. But *the* man among us, seeing his opportunity, hearing his call, will eventually burst through, and, being quick to follow a lead, we shall acclaim him, learn from him, reward him, and then let him and his tradition become an incubus on us in face of some rising age in which, for a time, some new nation will take the lead.

In order to escape the charge of glorifying a people to which, at least partially, I belong, let me hasten to say that we should do all this precisely because of the men that that nation will have given us. If eventually—and no doubt we shall—we beat the Germans in the great war of by-products, it will probably be because of the German strain that is in us already; if eventually we did beat the Flemings at wool-weaving, it was because Philippa of Hainault introduced into England many large colonies of Flemish weavers; if eventually we took the finer textile trades from the French it was because France sent us the Huguenots.

In the larger matter of political manœuvres it has always seemed to me that this characteristic was particularly observable. England's greatness as an international factor in Europe began incidentally with the birth of the modern world.* And, for me, as I have said, the modern world was born with the discovery of the political theory of the balance of the Powers in Europe. That this discovery was in any particular sense modern, I am not inclined to assert. Julius Cæsar, for instance, as a boy ridded the Eastern Mediterranean of pirates by skilfully taking advantage of the fact that he was an isolated third party in a naval warfare between freebooters. And, no doubt, that very able and very wonderful man, King John of England, used and felt the effects of a nice adjustment of international forces. But, upon the whole—speaking impressionistically—we may say that the mediæval history of Western Europe before the fifteenth century, and the history of England in particular during that period, leaves upon the mind the impression of being a matter, or a long series of matters, decided by sword blows. Before that date,

* Let me here very particularly impress upon the reader that these remarks are intended as a purely personal view. They are matters to promote argument; they are views, not statements of fact, spoken with any *ex cathedra* weight. They are intended to arouse discussion, not to instruct; they are part of a scheme according to which one thinker arranges his ideas. If, in short any other thinker would present us with a scheme as workable for his particular temperament, I should be perfectly willing to make the attempt to arrange my ideas according to that scheme.

as a rule, the king was a man who smote his opponent over the head with a heavy mace and set upon his own brows the circlet that he found in a thorn bush. In this mode of international contact England did little more than hold its own. Its fleets at times held the seas, at times were driven from them. If England had its Black Princes, France had its Du Guesclins and its Joans of Arc. The Plantagenets were the great and haughty race of their age, the fine flower of combatant royalty. But the Plantagenets were Frenchmen. And, if we took France, we were driven out of France. We ended up, upon the whole, all square. Many factors, no doubt, conduced to this end—internal warfares, pestilences, the awakening of the dominant type in these islands. But, upon the whole, at the end of the fourteenth century, at the death of Henry VII. and during the early years of Henry VIII., England counted for practically nothing in the comity of European nations.

I am aware that this statement of the case is a thought contrary to the general impression. But upon the whole it is historically true, since the general impression takes little account of such abortive attempts at invasion of France as that made by Henry VIII. in the first year of his reign. He sent, that is to say, a great expedition of horse and foot into Spain with the intention that, with the aid of the Spaniards, they should take France and divide it. But every kind of failure and ignominy awaited this

attempt, and, great though the effort was, we have forgotten it.

We may, however, reconsider it for the moment; it is, that is to say, significant that it was not a direct frontal attack upon France. The expedition was intended to make its way through the country, and with the aid of a friendly nation. In that sense it was what I may call modern in spirit. It was, at the same time, conceived in the older spirit, since it was a haphazard, unprepared blow, struck without much preliminary negotiation. It was, in short, a conception akin to the old one of a word and a blow; there was not any particular manœuvring to obtain a diplomatic advantage; there was not any particularly patient waiting for an advantageous moment to strike. It was, moreover, practically the last attempt of an English king to assert by force of arms his theoretic right to the throne of France. It seems to mark, this futile, disastrous sortie, the end of the old era.

In a former book, when comparing the works of Dürer with those of Holbein, I had occasion to say that the life which Dürer's art seems to chronicle was at its close. It had been essentially an out-of-door life. Dürer's lords rode hunting in full steel from small castles in rugged rocks; the flesh of his figures is hardened, dried and tanned by exposure to the air. But Holbein's lords no longer rode hunting. The change had set in fully by 1530 or so, when Holbein chronicled the English court. His lords were precisely indoor statesmen; they dealt in intrigues;

they inhabited palaces, not castles; their flesh was rounded, their limbs at rest, their eyes sceptical. And, indeed, the composite photograph that I have had made from the portraits left by Holbein does portray a definite type—a definite type that rather curiously coincides with Holbein's sketches of the typical Englishman of that day. This was a heavy, dark, bearded, bull-necked animal, sagacious, smiling, but with devious and twinkling eyes—a type that nowadays is generally found in the English rural districts. If it is not too topical or too personal, I should say that he reminds me, this typical Englishman, most of all of Dr. W. G. Grace, the cricketer.

And, indeed, a sort of peasant-cunning did—let me add again the qualifying "to my mind"—distinguish the international dealings of the whole world at that date. Roughly speaking, the ideals of the chivalric age were altruistic; roughly speaking, the ideals of the age that succeeded it were individualist-opportunist. It was not, of course, England that was first in the field, since Italy produced Macchiavelli. But Italy, which produced Macchiavelli, failed utterly to profit by him. England, on the other hand, had to wait many years before falling into line with the spirit of its age. It had, as it were, to wait until most of the vested interest of the middle ages were got rid of—until practically the last of the great barons were brought to the ground. It had to wait until a man could climb from the very lowest stage of

the body politic into the very highest chair that the republic could offer. But then it profited exceedingly, so that the England which, at the opening of Henry VIII.'s reign, had been the laughing-stock, became, towards the close of that reign, the arbiter of Europe.

But it *did* produce from its depths, from amidst its bewildering cross currents of mingled races, *the* great man of its age; and, along with him, it produced a number of men similar in type, and strong enough to found a tradition. The man, of course, was Thomas Cromwell, who welded England into one formidable whole, and his followers in the tradition were the tenacious, pettifogging, cunning, utterly unscrupulous and very wonderful statesmen who supported the devious policy of Queen Elizabeth—the Cecils, the Woottons, the Bacons and all the others of England's golden age.

This splendid and efficient dominant type had, of course, its apogee, its crest of the wave and its decline. It fell a little low with the second of the Stuart Kings and, as far as international expression was concerned, its place was taken by the new, Puritan type. This type, efficient if not very splendid, is interesting, because it shows so very immediately a foreign origin. You have only to go back a generation or so to find its introduction into England. In Ben Jonson's day the Puritan was still being laughed at for a sanctimonious and nefarious Low Country sniffler in black; within a generation the strain was

ruling England. It was, too, dictating terms to France, just as it had laid the foundations of a New England. If the suddenness of its uprising and the violence of its manifestations caused it to fall into temporary discredit in this country—for the Restoration was the product of a mere reaction—it recuperated itself soon enough in the final expulsion of the Stuarts.

For we may put it that James II. was the last representative of the statesmanship which, founded by Macchiavelli, reached its highest point with Thomas Cromwell, the Cecils, Strafford, Laud, and Richelieu, and declined with Mazzini towards the obstinate impracticability of the last Stuart king. Speaking very generally, we may say that mediæval England was ruled by French-Norman; renaissance England and the England of the Stuarts by Italian-Celtic dominant types. And, speaking very generally, we may say that both those types were dominant also in the occidental Europe of that day. The great rebellion of the Cromwellians, the revolution of William III. and the whole Georgian era, were a calling out of the Germanic forces of the nation.

In my private picture of these great national waves I see the dominant type of the centuries preceding Henry VIII. as rufous, reddish tanned, with dusky-red complexions; the dominant type of the Tudor-Stuart ages presents itself to me as dark, bearded and shrewd; the years following the fall of James Stuart seem to me to show the gradual

growth of a dominant type that was fair-haired; ingenuous perhaps, unimaginative perhaps, but "sentimental." I do not wish to imply that the pre-Tudor psychology was childish, but it seems to me that pre-Tudor history appeals more directly to the boy in us. That is probably because its history was largely a matter of wars for the acquisition of territory or upon the point of honour. And, upon the whole, save for the episodes of Smithfield burnings, of the Armada and the pirating on the Spanish Main, of Drake and his rivals, the Tudor-Stuart periods of dominance interest the boy in us very little. They were, that is to say, periods of tortuous intrigues, upon no settled basis of principle. Neither the quasi-religious manœuvres of Henry VIII., nor the matrimonial manœuvres of that King and Queen Elizabeth interest either the man or the boyhood of the nation very much. I am far, indeed, from wishing to be taken as implying that these things in themselves are uninteresting; but the case may be put very fairly that for one person who will know anything of Cardinal Pole's crusade against his sovereign, ten thousand will be found remembering the comparatively unimportant exploits of Richard of the Lion Heart. And, for one person who remembers the great works of Thomas Cromwell, twenty thousand will be found to grow condemnatory or enthusiastic over the actions, relatively unimportant, of his great-nephew.

For, the pre-Tudor times appeal, by their actions,

to the schoolboy that is in us all; the post-Stuart times appeal, for their principles, to the amateur moralist that is in us all. But the Tudor-Stuart era is interesting merely for its exhibitions of human greed, heroism, bigotry, martyrdom or savagery. It is, as it were, a projection of realism between two widely differing but romantic movements. I am aware that in thus writing down the Puritan age as romantic I lay myself open to the disagreeable charge of writing paradoxes. But I write in all sincerity, using, perhaps, only half appropriate words. For in essentials, the Stuarts' cause was picturesque; the Cromwellian cause was a matter of principle. Now a picturesque cause may make a very strong and poetic appeal, but it is, after all, a principle that sweeps people away. For poetry is the sublime of common-sense; principle is wrong-headedness wrought up to the sublime pitch—and that, in essentials, is romance.

I possess the diary of my English grandfather, a romantic of the romantics, a man who never survived his early Byronism. In its faded bluish pages, stained with a faded and rusting ink, he records the minutiæ of a strenuous, a heroic and a very romantic struggle with a world unsympathetic enough. At the end of one of his very hard days he had sat down to read, I should say, Macaulay. He had been in the winter air painting a shawl which was sadly needed indoors by his patient wife. In pursuance of his principle of recording the smallest details, he had frozen his

hands so that he could no longer hold a brush that night. And there, suddenly, in a sprawled and sputtering handwriting, in great letters appears the portentous announcement—the result of his winter night's reading:—

"I love Dutch William!"

I confess that, at the first, being confronted with this point of view—with this national outburst—I rubbed my eyes. For one cannot imagine any Romantic writing the words in sober, or in romantic earnest. It seems as difficult, at first sight, to love William III. as to love Queen Anne or George II. No one is more unpicturesque. But no one is more of a principle typified. It is difficult to call up any personage of recorded English history who is less of a figure than William III.; it is, indeed, difficult to call him up at all. One remembers neither his features nor the cut of his hair; neither his clothes nor whether he stood six feet high. Nevertheless, this vacant space stands for principles the most vital to the evolution of modern England—of the whole modern, Germanised world. If, in fact, William III. was no figure, he was very assuredly the figurehead of a very portentous vessel.

And no doubt inspired by the Victorian canons, by principles of Protestantism, commercial stability, political economies, Carlylism, individualism and liberty—provided, too, with details of feature, dress, and stature, no doubt my grandfather could evolve a picture of a strong, silent, hard-featured, dominant

personality. Rising hot-headed from his romantic perusal he inscribed, before putting out his light, the words: "I love Dutch William."

Be that as it may—and I think the diagnosis is in this case a just one—my personal impression of the three more or less distinct phases of the English court—the pre-Tudor, the Tudor-Stuart and the post-Stuart—remains that of fair quasi-Communist, dark Socialist-Tory, and blonde Germanic-Protestant-individualist dominant types. Incidentally I may note that that entry in my grandfather's diary does, to some extent, substantiate my theory, that the post-Stuart period most interests the adults among us, the pre-Tudor making an appeal to the young who have not yet formed themselves. It is true that in my own later years at school we were confronted—I am bound to say, appalled—by a text-book which was called, I think, a "Short History of the English People," which sought to push the theocratic period much further back than the Tudors. But I well remember the rage and indignation which its substitution for our other manuals excited. In our particular class the really brilliant boys sank to the lowest places, and I sank with them. And the pained look upon our head-master's face—a mild, bearded, dark, rather excitable face, with spectacles that gleamingly half hid a slight cast in the black eyes—the disappointment and the trouble, I remember very well after many years. He was a man who took a pride in, who had an affection for, his best boys. And they failed rather

lamentably to follow, or to remember, history as it was put by the Short Historian. They had been brilliant to seize the points, the incidents, the adventures of kings and generals. Facts were vivid in their minds; the onus of a gradual and ordered growth of a democratic people, puzzled and confused them. They could get, I mean, some sort of idea of life from the facts; they could add something of themselves to the recital. But they could only memorise the pages of the "Short History of the English People," and, in consequence, it was what Mr. E—— called his parrot boys that came to the top. I fancy that it was for this reason, as much as any, that Mr. E——, who was an artist in teaching, who delighted to feel himself in sympathy with awakened intelligence and disliked forcing pages of sound theory into dull memories; who, in fact, was an educator and not an instructor—that it was for this reason that Mr. E—— shortly afterwards resigned his headmastership. I remember very well his standing on high by his table, his ragged gown flapping behind him, his mild dark eyes bent upon a tormentor, who was the top boy. A——s, a small, spectacled automaton with a slight impediment in his speech, had completed without a hitch a long sentence beginning: "The evolution of the English peasant was never more strikingly exemplified . . ."

Mr. E—— said impatiently, "Very well, A——s, "but what does it mean?"

A——s fingered the top button of his coat:

"It means," he said, "'that the evolution of the English peasant was never'——"

Mr. E—— stopped him with a "tut-tut!" "What does it *mean?*" he asked, his voice rising.

A——s stuttered very badly:

"It—t—t means that the evolution of—of——"

Mr. E—— sat down exasperatedly and rapped the table for three or four seconds. His dark head hung down dejectedly.

"Ah well," he said at last, "you'll be an immense credit to the school, A——s, in the examination room!"

He bade us write an essay on the "Statute of Uses and its effect upon the psychology of the Reformation," and, whilst we sighed in silence at this impossible task, even A——s not having committed these pages to memory, Mr. E—— himself began to write. It was, I believe, his letter of resignation to the governors that he was composing. At any rate, all the school knew next morning that Mr. E—— was going. During his tenure of the headmastership, the school had dwindled in numbers to the extent of 150 boys. Mr. E——, in fact, could not be brought to regard himself as a crammer, and under him we gained only four scholarships.

I do not wish to draw from this the moral that Mr. Green's History is ill-adapted for its special purpose; but I do seem to see in this particular scene evidence that the theory of evolution, as applied to English history, is little fitted to the boyish apprehension. It

is, it seems to me, ill-fitted because it calls upon a boy to be acquainted with modern trains of thought; to be acquainted, in fact, with modern conditions of life, and to read into mediæval history the lessons that only years of experience or years of reading the leaders in newspapers and the works of the Victorian writers could have taught him.

It is easy, in fact, to say that the turning of the agricultural districts to wool farming led inevitably to the evolution of the Puritan spirit, when you know that the Puritan spirit succeeded to the quasi-Catholic-quasi-Pagan phase of English mediæval life. But you will only see that when you have learned the doctrine that the sole purpose of English mediæval strivings was to produce the Protestant, individualist, free speech, free thought, free trade, political economics of the Victorian era. This doctrine, this group of doctrines, this once tremendous frame of mind was so riveted on the people of the nineteenth century, that its theories might well be accepted as unquestionable fact. There stood all these things, from Protestantism to freedom, firm, unquestionable, unshakeable, —and thus, in the psychology of the man, divine intervention in favour of the nineteenth century was as deducible from his study of history, as in the boy was the theory that Providence was on the side of the Englishman. I remember once putting it tremblingly to a very liberal relative of the pre-Home Rule days —putting it that, according to his theory of the gradual growth of liberty in the English race, the

cataclysmic abolition of the monasteries was a mistake. He regarded me from above a foam-flecked, blonde beard of an imposing venerability.

"Of course," he said, "the monasteries were not abolished gradually. It wasn't evolution that did away with them. They were swept away because they were in the way of a gentle evolution."

I said, in absolute good faith:

"Then the law of a gradual evolution was not invariable?"

He made a great and irritable gesture with his plump white hands.

"You irritate me with your casuistry," he said. "I have just explained the matter. The monasteries had to go because they cumbered the ground; it was inevitable. Besides, if they had not gone how should we have reached our Paradise—or the Puritan spirit? That's the backbone of England."

It was, I suppose, this sort of reading of history that the adult Victorian sought to impose upon the Victorian schoolboy. I think that it probably grated, since I am sure that it inspired my classmates with an invincible dislike for, say, Sir Robert Walpole. But it certainly induced our grandfathers to love Dutch William, and to believe that the Puritan spirit is the backbone of England. Perhaps it is.

In a sense I am, I am aware, running counter to an accepted idea, when I say that the modern Puritanism of English life began, not with the

Cromwellians, but with the coming of William III. The Cromwellians, in fact, seem to me to have left little enough mark in England. The Revolution, since it led the way for Walpole and the National Debt, still holds us in its clutches. It did away with personal Royalty; it did away with priesthood; it did away very emphatically with the Arts, or rather, with the artistic spirit as a factor in life. And it began the process of doing away with the County Interest. Philosophically speaking, too, it began that divorce of principle from life which, carried as far as it has been carried in England, has earned for the English the title of a nation of hypocrites. It did this, of course, because it riveted Protestantism for good and evil upon the nation's dominant types. For, speaking very broadly, we may say that Catholicism, which is a religion of action and of frames of mind, is a religion that men can live up to. Protestantism no man can live up to, since it is a religion of ideals and of reason. (I am far from wishing to adumbrate to which religion I give my preference; for I think it will remain to the end a matter for dispute whether a practicable or an ideal code be the more beneficial to humanity.) But, by voting once and for all for Protestantism, by casting out from us the possibilities of dominance of that pagan half of humanity which is fitted for Catholicism, the Revolution doomed England to be the land of impracticable ideals. Before that date a man could live without his finger upon his moral

pulse: since then it has grown gradually more and more impossible.

And inasmuch as, by the lusty sort of health and appetite that it brings, a country life does in essence tend to produce pagans, the Revolution did tend towards producing a dominant type that could no longer inhabit the country. And, inasmuch as it is in the nature of man to desire to rise to eminence, we may say that the Revolution did conduce towards the present building up of the great towns. That we are now tending towards a reaction against these tendencies seems to me to be arguable, and in a subsequent chapter I shall endeavour to put that case. But for the present let me return to my main argument —that of the successive dominant types that the land has produced. It is not my purpose to do more than slightly allude to such of these as suit my purpose.*

It may be taken for granted as a general impression that the immediate effect of the Revolution was to do away with loyalty to the personal King. It produced in its stead a loyalty to the Throne; and the Throne meant an institution whose main purpose was to conserve certain definite interests—those mainly of Protestantism and the money-making classes. It did away with Clarendon, who was more royalist than the King; it produced John Churchill, Duke of Marl-

* I do this without scruple—because, obviously, my desire is to produce an argument that may or may not be controverted, and not to lay down with a high hand any law that is to be regarded as immutable or incontrovertible.

borough, and his wife, who was more royal than his sovereign; it did away with the irresponsible enjoyment of life, and rendered possible the sentimental movement; it did away with the true Toryism which is Socialism, and rendered possible Individualism, which to-day we call the upholding of the right to free competition; it gave us, in fact, liberty by gradually removing responsibility from the State—and it gave us two centuries of enmity to France and of growing subjection to German ideals.

So that, if indeed it be true that the enemy is Prussianism—that the world is gradually coming to a state of mind in which it shall be most important to a nation to produce the more essentially Germanic type, we may well hope to produce the man. We may well hope, in fact, to muddle through. We have, in the composition of our complex Republic, Germans enough to select from. And it must be re-affirmed that the Germans who have come to England, like the Scots, the Danes, the French, the Poles, the Huguenots or the Doukhobors, are precisely the bad eggs, the adventurous, the restless, the energetic of their several nations. And these adventurers, these restless, these energetic units are, precisely too, the best breeders for a fighting race. We may, in fact, very well produce yet another dominant type that shall help England to retain its own, and to gain just that little bit of material advantage that, except in the great struggle with the English superman across the Atlantic, England has always had. Just as in a

world attuned to Plantagenet ideas, England produced the Plantagenets; just as in a world attuned to Macchiavelli, England produced Thomas Cromwell; just as in a world that was opening up to adventurers, England produced the Drakes and the Raleighs; just as in a world fitted for parades of troops and tortuous intrigues with a Roi Soleil, England produced a William III. and a Marlborough—so England may well hope to produce a man fitted to contend, in the end with the Kaiser or Professor who is to set the tune for the next generation. We might even produce a plenty of the best Slav blood to lead us against Slavs. We might produce anybody to lead us against anything. Given, in fact, its proper breathing space in which the man may arise, England may yet muddle through, since England is not a nation, not the home of a race, but a small epitome of the whole world, attracted to a fertile island by the hope of great gain, or by the faith that there a man may find freedom. The other day I was down at the docks, watching the incoming of a ship that brought many Jews from Odessa. As man after man crossed the gangway he knelt down and kissed the muddy coping of the wharf. That was because still, as for the Anabaptists and the Huguenots, England appears to the bad eggs of the nations to be the land of freedom. And it is not impossible that one of the children of one of these adventurers may be, like another Disraeli, the man who will help England to muddle through.

FAITHS.

CHAPTER IV.

FAITHS.

I WAS asked some time ago, on the banks of a great foreign river, by a fair-haired foreign girl, for the name of an English book to read. She seemed to be conversant with the whole of the Tauchnitz collection; she knew the names at least of all the English novelists, essayists and romancers with whom one could be acquainted; she knew, certainly, the names of many English writers that I had never heard of. She spoke English idiomatically; she was sufficiently akin to the English in sentiment to be able to appreciate a certain work, so parochially English that it dealt with the amenities of middle-class child-life in the topography of Kensington Gardens. That, she had found ravishing. I suggested to her the name of the one English work of importance that she had not read, because she risked certain considerable penalties in the perusal. I told her that although, from reading the eminent secular novelists and the less eminent novelists whose works are merely commercial in value, she would doubtless

acquire, or had already acquired, a considerable insight into the psychology of the various classes portrayed by novelists, essayists or romancers, she could not claim even a nodding acquaintance with the real bases of the Spirit of the People until she had assimilated this particular book. A month or so later she said to me:

"I have finished reading it; it is *horrible.*"

Upon the whole you could not have said that she was not English to look at her—only in her enunciation of the word that meant "*horrible*" there was a sincerity that was entirely un-English. Because, of course, no typical Englishwoman of her class would be allowed, or would allow herself, to come in contact with anything that is really "horrible." An Englishwoman, after all, must not be moved; if she suffers it she is not English. But the blue eyes of Miss G—— were really rigid with horror at the remembrance of what she had read. The book was *horrible.*

That a girl should be so moved by the reading of the English Bible did not strike me as peculiar upon reflection, though for the moment I had to cast about in my mind for a reason. The point of view was new to me. Of course the Bible is forbidden reading to the great majority of Christians—but that is for reasons purely doctrinal, purely arbitrary, purely of priestcraft. One accepts the fact, not as a judgment of the Bible, as poetry, or as a projection of life; it is merely because it is inconvenient to the priest-

hood of a certain Church that their special interpretation of passages should be called in question. It is part of a game, of a system; it reflects no discredit on the Bible as a projection of a frame of mind. But Miss G——'s emotion was a direct censure of Biblical morality. It said: "Here is a book, horrible for its ferocity, for the bloodthirsty incidents that it realistically portrays, horrible for its rendering of sexual necessities, horrible for its spirit." Miss G——, in fact, regarded it with the new candour of a reader confronted with a terrifying French piece of realism: it was as if she had been reading of the gigantic metal automaton in Flaubert's "Salambo"— the metal automaton that into its blazing jaws lifted the bodies of living children to be incinerated.

Thinking about the matter, I remembered a certain evening service at which I had been present. There is a country church which I attend somewhat frequently. It is ancient Norman in character, on a tranquil knoll in the pleasant English south. You cannot figure for your private satisfaction anything more delightful, anything more soothing, than to sit out a service in the little pews of one of the aisles. Through the small windows the trees are seen to spread tranquil boughs; the organ drones; the choir boys sing in tune, and the wonderful English of the church service awakens all the singular and very blissful remembrances of one's boyhood between white stone walls. And, upon the whole, there is nothing in life that I more rejoice in than that,

as a boy, I went regularly to English Church services. It is a thing that a nation may be devoutly thankful for: it canonifies, it blesses, a whole side of one's life. It is not, of course, everything—but it is the most tranquil thing in life as it to-day is lived.

But, as I sat that evening in the little church at I——, in the quiet of the sunset, great rays of light fell across the chancel. The choristers sat still, the cry of sheep came in through the opened doors, a swallow flitted round among the square pillars, and the priest read the first lesson. I listened attentively —and suddenly the whole tone of what was being read seemed appalling. And all that service, from psalms to offertory, seemed overwhelming. I looked round me to see if no one else noticed it; but there was no sign. An old man with a shaven chin looked with weary eyes at the palms of his hands; a little boy, with a callous, shaven head, was cutting his initials on a corner of the pew; the great tenant-farmer of the parish had his head cocked back and gazed at the panes above the reredos with eyes that saw nothing. But the first lesson was, precisely, horrible. It described how a king, incited by priests and the Almighty, sent his soldiers to surround a church, to massacre the worshippers and to behead them. It made you see the soldiery returning with hands sticky with blood, to cast baskets of palm-leaves, each one filled with a head, at the feet of the king as he sat in his courtyard.

I am not, of course, quarrelling with the concep-

tion of a deity; it is to me nothing that Jehovah should claim his tens of thousands or Torquemada his thousands. These things are the necessary concomitants of certain phases of human thought; they exist, and cannot be questioned. But the second lesson was about damnation; the psalms were gloomily minatory. Even the sermon was tinged with a black, predestinarian pessimism, and dealt rather intelligently with the mental horrors that must be endured for all eternity by the outcast of the next world. But this, as I have said, was acceptable enough: if you sin against the Omnipotent you must take the wages of sin. I will however confess that the whole thing filled me with gloom; it was so tremendously well projected that, for the moment, the view of life, such as it was, seemed irrefutable. The statements were so definite, the language so tremendous and so inspired. It was, precisely, horrible—since horror was the feeling that the whole service caused to arise.

Receding from these particular emotions I do not, of course, feel the same horror. I am filled instead with a sort of wonder that for so long I could have basked in the tranquillity of these services. For I will repeat, that there are in the Church service certain moments which are unsurpassable in this life. There is, for instance, the wonderful pause at the very end. The priest has uttered the beautiful sentence which begins: "The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts . . ."

And then an absolute silence falls—a silence that seems to last a lifetime, an utter abandonment, a suspension of life. Then someone sighs, someone stirs, a great rustle commences, and, a little sobered, one is again ready to face the material world. I can imagine nothing quite like this; the silence of the canon of the mass is profoundly exciting and disturbing; even the silence of a Quakers' meeting in one of the bare Friends' Houses is a tension, not a restfulness; but this silence is a slight footnote, a momentary suggestion of that peace which passeth all understanding. I am anxious to emphasise my partaking in this feeling, because in other places it is my purpose to write in cold blood of this very wonderful product of the national frame of mind. Having done it, let me return to my analysis of the horror of the actual tenets.

For the calmness of the assistants at this terrible drama seems to me to be extraordinarily characteristic of the singularly English faculty—the faculty of ignoring the most terrible of facts; the faculty, in short, which makes us the nation of official optimists. For the singular congregation of that church—and of all our churches—was kindly minded to a high degree. It would have been appalled at the idea of the slaughter, nowadays, of ten thousand sheep, it would have blanched dreadfully at the thought of the slaughter of ten thousand men, even of ten thousand enemies of the British God of Battles. But most

of them listened to the details of this sacrifice to Jehovah, who was their own God—sat and listened unmoved, not inattentively, but probably in the same frame of mind as that of children listening to fairy tales. They half-believed, half-disbelieved; it all took place so very long ago. If the same set of circumstances should arise, no doubt Jehovah would exact of the English king that he should make the same sacrifice—but, fortunately, in these days of pleasant Sunday clothes, of the tranquillity of an English Sabbath, of the faint smell of prayer-book leather and glove leather—in these days no such set of circumstances could thinkably arise. People don't any longer do such things; probably there no longer exist such inscrutably noxious heathens; Baal, in fact, is dead—so this wonderful and happy people has no call to think about these slaughters. We owe still the cock to Æsculapius—but he would never think of exacting it.

It is, in fact, one of the things that it is unfair to mention. And really it is unfair. I have frequently been struck with that aspect of the case when I have listened to one of the Atheist orators in the London parks. In some strange way the Englishman has digested the early ferocity of his creed just as he has assimilated all his early conquerors; and, just as he will say, "These fellows are ourselves," so he will feel that his God, who now gives a peace which passes all understanding, has assimilated the Jehovah of Joshua the son of Nun. It isn't, that is

to say, his business to see life steadily or to see it whole. The audience of the London park Atheist never puts the matter coldbloodedly that the remorseless follower of cause is effect, whether you call effect Jehovah or indigestion; it never puts to the Atheist the fact that if you eat your cake you cannot have it, that if you enjoy yourself you must pay for it, whether you call your Baal the pursuit of pleasure or your Jehovah race deterioration. I question, indeed, whether the Englishman—that typical, composite photograph that, for his convenience, each one of us carries, and labels "my countryman"—whether the Englishman really believes these things.

The English Church allows of no Purgatory between Heaven and Hell. The English official Deity is a just God. But I think that, for the Englishman, this just God is just in the sense only that he rewards the good. The evil he lets slip by him, as the Englishman, remarking "poor devil," would let most impotent sinners escape punishment. So that, if the modern Englishman dispenses with Purgatory, it is because he hardly believes in Hell. He will repeat to his children a hundred times in the caresses of childhood the familiar proverb: if questioned, held to it, and, unfairly pressed, he will acknowledge the truth of it; but he will never believe with the instinctive faith that is part of all our lives, that you cannot eat your cake and have it.

Two alternatives present themselves to us in the consideration of this phenomenon. Perhaps he is

actually right in his belief; perhaps there *is* a third term between cause and effect; or perhaps, in the alternative, it is only that he does right to believe this fallacy. It is, perhaps, that alone which makes him keep all on doing things. For it must be remembered that, according to his creed and to the creed of his fathers more especially, we are, all humanity, miserable sinners. We act always wrongly, but somehow we muddle through. And, upon the whole, we hope to do this in the face of the Almighty, as we hope to do it in the face of all the nations arrayed for our downfall. It is, I think, an English town frame of mind, this of muddling through; perhaps it is a town and maritime frame of mind; for the seaman faces appalling elements with his little machines of sticks and strings, so disproportionately tiny that they seem an absurd challenge to the force of the waters. Yet somehow he reaches his port. And the townsman has to fight with the millions of his fellow townsmen and survive in the business he makes his career. His watchword, his catchword, is that something will turn up. He trusts to a fortuitous rise in the Bank rate to give him, finally, a competence; he trusts to the miraculous properties of some widely-advertised pill to save him from the effects of an irrational mode of life. Or, perhaps, it is only that the hurry and rush of what we call modern life—which is a city product—perhaps it is only that that allows him to forget the eternal verities.

But the countryman is perpetually faced by them; he battles with things that have been the same since the world began—with rain, with frosts, with the too great heat of the sun in droughty weather. He does not, taken as a whole, have much hope of attaining to an ultimate reward greater than his deserts. He does not keep on doing things in the hope that something may turn up trumps. He keeps, as I have said before, "all on gooing," without much hope of a better state. He reads his Bible more closely, in fact. Jehovah still exists for him; the sinner is still the sinner—not the poor devil who will scrape through when God, applauded by all the good-natured, momentarily averts his face. And, indeed, it is in the country—it is at least in the provincial frame of mind—that one will still discover the stern, old fashion of Protestantism. Perhaps that is only to say that the countryman is, precisely, old-fashioned.

One will find, of course, centres of Protestantism dispersed in all the towns; one will find bigotry, narrow-mindedness, genuine faith, or simple, heavy earnestness. And, perhaps, the heart of the nation is, in that sense, still sound. But in essence the note of the great towns is that of tolerance; a town is a great, loose, easy-going place, where a man may do pretty well what he pleases—may break away from chapel, church, or conventicle, and disappear for ever in some next street. So that, speaking broadly, we may say that the simple faith, the simple, earnest intolerance of small or large

knots of allied worshippers—the Protestant-Puritan spirit, is precisely "provincial." I do not write the word in any sneering spirit, but simply state the fact that Puritanism is out of fashion in the towns. It is no longer for the moment in the swim; but very possibly—if we remember the phenomena of our past history, we should say very probably—it will return again. It must be remembered, for instance, that in the seventeenth century the town frame of mind was that of dilettante atheism; any kind of religious belief was quite hopelessly not in the swim. And following immediately upon this came the great wave of Methodism, with its miraculous calling to life of a religious spirit throughout town and country alike. To-morrow, in fact, there may be a revival.

It would be hardly possible for there not to be a revival if the conditions of the nation had not altered very materially since the days of Wesley. But it must be remembered, again, that in the days of Wesley the preponderance of the population was still in the country, and that Methodism was a country reaction. Nowadays the preponderance of the townsman is so huge that it is difficult to imagine a movement in the rural districts that should seriously affect the towns. And, nowadays, even the spirit of the very rural districts seems to have been breathed upon by a new kind of thought. There is a certain country chapel which I pass every day. It is a new, red-brick, expensive structure. Round the corner is a little old barn which John Wesley himself built, in which

Wesley himself preached, which this red and yellow structure has replaced. The new chapel has windows in imitation of stained glass; these windows portray scenes in the life of the Virgin, culminating with her coronation in Heaven at the hands of her Divine Son.

This surprises in itself, but it might have been an accident, due to the fact that the German commercial traveller who brought round samples of his transfers came from the neighbourhood of Cologne. Yet, when I put the matter to the Wesleyan in authority in the village, he was not at all perturbed. He answered simply: "Well, I don't see why they should not have crowned the Virgin in Heaven. She deserved it."

He was perfectly sincere; and no doubt he was perfectly right. Nevertheless, his frame of mind does seem to betray a singular loss of touch with the theological* history of his creed. He was much more sound in his secular history, for once when I walked up with him from the station, he said to me—with a very great sincerity too—"I suppose that if the Papists came into power again they would burn us all!" And I do not question that Mr. W——

It should be remarked that the theological notions of this gentleman were very bizarre. The cook of a family in our village being much perturbed to account for the fact that the mistress allowed no currants in the kitchen went to Mr. W——, who was her spiritual guide. He said: "Oh, Mrs. —— is a Mahometan, and it is part of her creed not to eat currants!"

would cheerfully go to the stake in defence of the tradition whose tenets he had so tolerantly forgotten.

Probably this, too, is only a symptom of that general good nature that has spread through England; most Wesleyans are as much inclined to deprecate the sterner manifestations of their earlier years as are the Anglicans who deprecate the earlier sternness of the agents of Jehovah. And the Wesleyan who is prepared to go to the stake thinks that contingency as unlikely to arise as does the Anglican who would be prepared to carry out the dictates of a New Jehovah. In a similar way Unitarians, Congregationalists or Quakers will deprecate the earlier phases of their creed. Of course, the revival may be yet to come.

But upon the whole it may be doubted whether the revival in the nation will come soon. The signs of the times, in the town and country, are against it. Speaking impressionistically—and I hope not offensively—I should say that what distinguishes the worshippers belonging to the Established Church is a frame of mind and not a religion—a frame of mind in which, though the ethical basis of Christianity is more or less excellently preserved, the theological conditions remain in a very fragmentary condition. I do not mean to say that the higher criticism has led to this cleavage—but that the general sense of the congregations has rendered any literal acceptance of, say, the Athanasian Creed, almost a thing of the past. (I wish again to guard myself from seeming to

imply that it may not be a thing of the future.) But the whole psychology of the immediate present is a thing of such minutiæ; our attention is charmed by such an infinity of small things, that close thinking—which theological logic demands—is for the moment almost impossible, save to the specialist. Thus the devout and carefully practising Churchman is apt to awaken and find the state of his mind to be singularly chaotic. I remember walking home from the service of which I have spoken with a singularly earnest Churchman, for whom I had and still cherish a very great affection. We discussed the immortality of the soul, and my friend, who was a man of sixty, made, as it were, then and there the discovery that he no longer believed in a future state. Nevertheless a belief in a just—and even in an avenging Deity—remained almost unshaken in his mind, and, along with it, his unwavering attachment to the Church.

He seemed, however, gradually to have dropped the other belief; it had vanished, fading away, little by little; it had been hardly missed in the passage through a very strenuous middle life. In much the same way, while we walked in the shadow of tall elms along the white road that still retained the heat of the day, the last vestige of rosy light had faded from the sky. The land lay about us, still visible, with its long valleys, its tranquil hollows, its blue sea-horizon. But the last tinge of red had gone from the shadows.

For my particular friend, the stress of a too com-

plex life had done this—a stress that eventually broke him down, the more easily, perhaps, in that he had lost the stay of that belief. So it may be for many people. But for many others, too, the same complexity of modern life, with so many of its inner depths, with so many of its privacies laid bare for our daily inspection—the mere number of things that we have to think about in order to remain at all in contact with our fellow men, has sapped much of our power for sustained thought.

I move principally among men of a certain type—men, that is to say, who "specialise" in one or other of the departments of thought. But it is rather seldom that I ever have time for any sustained discussion of any specialised department of thought—simply because the daily topic claims so much attention. With a clergyman one will find oneself discussing the surest method of obtaining novels from a lending library; with a mathematician, the latest murder; with a scientific agriculturist one begins to talk of the politics of the day, or a bishop will tell one of the latest idiosyncrasies of the admiral commanding the Channel Squadron. These idiosyncrasies will have been revealed in an interview with the admiral's lady and published in an illustrated service magazine. It is true that in the country this characteristic grows less rapidly, yet it is growing, and the newspapers facilitate the process daily. It is true, too, that in solitary chambers throughout the land, thinkers of the old school may

be found. Without doubt, in Cambridge, say, by applying to one of the Dons, one might come across men in book-lined cells pursuing some glorious and abstruse train of thought of all the trains started by Hume, pursuing it with that half-artistic, half-ironic fervour that has distinguished the English schools of thought of the past.

But, even amongst such thinkers, there is a tendency to turn their machinery of thought upon topics of the day. And I am not sure that such a process is not very valuable: the utterances of a mind trained in one or the other of the schools of preciser thinking—upon a *cause célèbre* in the divorce courts, or the ultimate ramifications of a Tibetan mission, may have a very material value, and, in the ultimate future, the evolution of a trained and slightly negative school of observers upon life as it is lived may well atone for the loss of several commentaries. Of that, one may well be uncertain; but it is hardly possible to doubt that the influence of the world upon the Churches is eminently destructive of the letter of laws.

It leaves, probably, the same capacity for faith—but for a faith of a vague and a humanitarian nature. It is, I mean, almost impossible for a man to believe that he and his comparatively small sect of the elect are the sole peoples that shall prosper upon the earth; it is almost impossible for a man to believe that when, say, the Japanese are sinking European fleets and prospering exceedingly. It is, in short,

possible to say that the Japanese are Englishmen in all but name, but it is impossible to believe that their success is due to the fact that they are, say, New Connexion Methodists with nominal differences.

Yet, until quite lately, it *was* possible to look at the world in that light. The prospering powers were invariably Christian, and almost always Protestant. French, Italian and Spaniards were, with a sufficient frequency to give support to the point of view, beaten by the Lion of the North, by the Protestant Hero, or by ourselves. The rising of the United States was a Protestant ascendancy. Even the Franco-Prussian War could be pressed into the service—for all Germans were Protestants, as all Frenchmen were atheists. These, in fact, were victories by people who, if they weren't Anglican, Low Church, Nonconformist, might by Anglican, Low Churchman or Nonconformist be considered almost of one faith with themselves. The Germans, for instance, are all Lutherans in the general view, and a High Churchman knows that Lutherans are very high; a Low Churchman knows they are very broad; a Nonconformist knows that they do not form a part of the Church of England as by law established. But the coming of the daily press has in several directions shaken this world theory. The enlightenment that the daily press has wrought has proved to us not only that German Lutherans are practically atheists and certainly not Bible Christians: has proved to us not only that the majority of the German people

are actually papists: it has proved to us that even the heathen have faiths respectable and venerable. I am not merely referring to the Japanese victories. For consider the possibility that some Indian prince of sacred rank should find it desirable to travel to England without setting foot upon any soil other than that of the land that saw the birth of Buddha, without victuals cooked in the waters of the Indus, and hourly ablutions in those of the Ganges.

The whole English world—or nearly the whole of it—would follow with respectful sympathy, or with a sporting interest—the building of a special vessel made of iron all mined in India, the conveying of tons of soil on to the decks, the construction of the special holds that should contain a sufficient supply of the waters of the holy stream. We should read, we should see drawings, of the almost miraculous tricks by which the journey was performed. In innumerable photographs we should see the sacred man himself, handsome, melancholy, austere, aloof. His journey safely accomplished, his return engineered, we should, when he set foot once more upon his secular and sacred ground, heave a national sigh of relief. And assuredly, for a moment, we should feel that this man did, indeed, possess some of the sacredness to which he laid claim—to which he had a prescriptive right conferred on him by the faith of many millions of the infinitely patient and the very wise in faiths. We should find it difficult then to go back to our services and imagine *all* the heathen as furiously raging.

In that way one little corner-stone of our doctrinal faith might be shaken. But we should not the less believe that God is good.

We have grown rather, to see that God, the giver of life, is very wonderful. Wonderful he is, in short, because he is so very complex—and faith, that of old was a matter of pondering upon a few simple certainties, tends more and more in this modern world of ours to become merely a frame of mind, religious, without doubt—fatalistic, very probably—with which a man may confront the changing aspects of his changing day. For it is very certain that, for the vast mass of the people, if the spread of knowledge of a sort have in these latter days dealt a shrewd blow to faith of a doctrinaire kind, it has killed atheism.

Nothing, in fact, is more striking in the modern world than this change of attitude in face of knowledgeable things. In the days of Darwin — which are surely not so long ago—the anti-Darwinians cried: "This is anathema!" The Darwinians cried: "This is the end of God!" But in these years we read yesterday, and we shall read to-morrow—in the enormous type—in the loose phraseology of the papers: "Discovery of the secret of life." And the statement being in print, we believe it as we believe in the discovery of a new cure for consumption. But it hardly shakes our position towards the eternal verities. We have, in the language of the newspapers, annihilated space so long ago, that there is

no reason why we should not destroy, sooner or later, the other attribute. We may, in fact, get rid of time, or achieve a physical immortality. But, though we may destroy the one half of the prophet's saying, we are faced with the other so long as man continues to be born of woman. We may, that is to say, become of many days: we have still to face sorrow. It is there that God comes in.

For the function of God, after all, is to teach us so to live that our strength may be as our days; that is the end to which the man with the religious frame of mind sets out. For, if he cease to believe in a personal immortality, a man becomes more filled with the desire for an immortality in his seed: for the consummation of a sane and healthy humanity. And it is there that the idea of God, again, comes in. We search the Scriptures still, to find that Jehovah is effect, Baal cause. . . .

That is, upon the whole, the impression that much converse with our fellows will leave upon most men, and, vaguely and indefinitely, he feels something akin to those feelings. But the calls of modern life are so insistent, the idea that a prosperous race is a race fertile of children has rendered competition so clamant upon our attentions that most men in England, as opposed to women, have little time to ponder upon these things at all. One sees, however, vaguely shadowed in the future, a day when the dictum: "*Taceat mulier in Ecclesiâ*" shall have found its earthly close.

It is naturally to America, that land of the future, that one must go to find the first manifestation of a cutting loose from this particular tradition. In America, of course, one will find everything: there a man may see the Mormon church, in which woman, more than anywhere else in Christendom, has been trampled under foot. For it must be remembered that monogamy is the one powerful, the one universal, law that woman has given us. There, also, one will find—according to the newspapers—the "first cathedral raised to a woman." The newspapers of course forget the temple of Diana, or the several cathedrals of the Blessed Virgin that may be found in both Old World and New. But, in the sense that the mother church of the Christian Scientists is the first manifestation in stone of a cult founded by a woman and administered largely by women, we may accept this headline as being as true as headlines can, in the nature of things, be expected to be. For Joanna Southcott, the false Joan of Arc, Elizabeth Burton, or Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, may be forgotten.

But, roughly speaking, we may say that the church founded by Mrs. Eddy is the first modern faith to be evolved by a woman. It is interesting, then, to examine this phenomenon as coldly as we have examined the more ancient creeds established by men. We find at once, as we might have expected, that the chief activity of the church is almost purely material: it deals with the attainment to a sane mind

by the evolution of a perfected body. I stayed for some time of a lately-passed summer in an oddly heterogeneous colony that had filled all the huts and hovels of a tract of sand dunes across the water. Here the tone was almost entirely set by the women. They came from all parts of the world—from New York, from Sweden, from New Zealand, from the Transvaal, and, naturally, many came from Hampstead. Beneath the tall pines the men of these women seemed to stand in loose-limbed, incongruous knots. They were artists, men from government offices, merchants, brewers, social reformers, schoolmasters or singers. They gave the impression of being careless, except as to the weather, which was rather execrable, heavy shafts of rain piercing the blue shields of foliage and digging minute pits in the white sand. . . . But they seemed, all these men, to be at very loose ends; their knots were small and isolated; they seemed to have lost the power of combination.

The women, on the other hand, appeared to form great and very voluble gatherings of fifties in the hollows. Their dresses were gay, flouting, many-coloured, or sad, close-cut and self-coloured. They were infinitely articulate—and an infinite number of children seemed to run in and out between their skirts, intent, as children will be, upon a world of their own. It was a scene eminently rejoicing to the eye and pleasant for the consideration. Here—and that was the dominant note—was man absolutely dethroned.

It is true that these were the holidays. The artists might make cartoons on brown paper to decorate the bare walls of barns: the musicians might accompany or might sing in the choirs. But they did this rather as helots, and the merchants, government officials and schoolmasters seemed to make up, as helots, too, the numbers of the congregation. They were, all of these men, good workers in their particular "lines;" they stood a little out of the common run, as being heavy and solid thinkers. But, beyond that, as general thinkers they were not, I should say, particularly gifted. You had, in short, to get them on their own grounds before they shone. And they were united by a common air: it was that of men returning from distant regions of work to find their households running riot. It was as if Ulysses had come back from long wanderings to find Penelope surrounded, not by suitors, but by professors of strange learning.

And thus, on their social sides at least, the cults of the morrow seem to be foreshadowed. The man must more and more specialise in his vocation: he must apply to his daily task his whole intellect and all his better parts. Returning from these depths of thought to the light of the world he must be dim-eyed and inarticulate. That the effects of this are felt in all departments of the arts every practitioner of them must know. It takes various forms, but the end is always the same. Thus every novelist knows that the only readers are the women: the distinctively

man's writer appeals only to a very small public. Every journalist knows, too, that the papers now are written with an eye that more often than not is turned to the women. In one quite serious paper that was newly started it was proposed to have an agricultural page once a week. The proposal was, however, negatived by the editor-in-chief, who substituted a woman's page. "All the other papers have it," he said. I was travelling, quite unwillingly, the other day in a railway carriage into which there introduced themselves, hurriedly at the last moment, a pleasant, well-dressed couple, obviously upon their honeymoon. At the next stopping station the gentleman leaned out of the window and purchased, apparently at random, a couple of daily papers. One of these, a substantial sheet of Conservative tendencies, he offered to his companion. She made a little *moue* and did not wish to take it. He substituted the other, remarking, "Oh, of course. The —— is the lady's paper, isn't it?" and, leaning back gracefully, she began to read the magazine page with what contentment my presence allowed her. The —— was the paper with the largest circulation in the world.

In one of the other arts this tendency reacts in a manner quite dissimilar. I was asking a very intimate friend what the ladies had talked about in the drawing-room after a certain dinner.

"Well," she said, "all the married women were lamenting the type of play they were forced to go

to." They would have preferred, all these martyrs said, to go and hear something "really vital;" something serious, harrowing or merely problematic. Instead of that, every one of them was forced to go to musical comedies. This was because their husbands came home from business too tired for serious entertainment. One of the ladies said she had been six times to the "Geisha." All the time she had been yearning to see "Ghosts."

The arts, of course, are not taken very seriously in England; but it should be remembered that, as society is at present constituted, it is to the arts alone that the English people can go for any knowledge of life. And it must be remembered, too, that from one's knowledge of life alone can a religion be compounded. We seem, then, to be driven to the conclusion that the religions of the immediate future must be founded upon kinds of art that appeal to women alone. And, since women alone have time to think or to feel, women, it would seem, must found the religions of the future. That this tendency is the more pronounced in the United States than even in the islands of the East Atlantic makes the prospect somewhat less dubious.

So that we seem to be faced by an ultimate return to those distinctively Alemannic conditions that, according to some sociologists, was the state from which the Teutonic races sprung. Here the basis of the household was, no doubt, "he to the plough"—but, to the pulpit, she. The system was

once matriarchal: that it may once more become. That, no doubt, is very right and proper: it is, at any rate, all in the day's journey for Humanity that, in its course through such a part of eternity as may belong to it, may well pass many times from woman's dominion to man's, and back again. But constructive or projective sociology is no part of my immediate purpose, which is that of constructing an image of my present day as it impresses me. Nevertheless, as an illustration, as an exaggeration, of tendencies now observable, the prophecy of feminine dominion is not without its illuminative uses. For, looking at things by its particular light, many things present themselves to us.

It is obviously begging the question to say that the result of the regiment of women at the present day is to belittle—to belittle in particular the Press, Christianity, and the Science of Healing. For the littleness of to-day is so very certainly the greatness of to-morrow that, from any aloof point of view, the theory is hardly worth combating. The press to-day is turning gradually along certain lines: it is converting itself into an organ for conveying, not sustained "articles" in one trend of thought, but an infinite number of small and interesting facts. This is a principle like another, and the object of the press being to attract attention by awakening interest, the principle is a very valid one. It should indeed be remembered that the principle is a very ancient one, too; for I suppose that two of the most

attractive books in the English language are Boswell's "Life of Johnson" and Florio's "Montaigne." And both of these works are, in essence, collections of "snippets." That they are well written tells in no wise against the contention, for there is nothing to prevent the small announcements of the daily press from being well put or even from being reasonably accurate.

It might indeed be said that the domination of the press by women has led simply to a greater honesty —that, for all the centuries during which man has been the public of the newspapers man has consented to be bored for the sake of a principle. Man, according to this theory, which I have heard gravely asserted, has thought that he ought to read informative matter; it is only woman that has had the common sense to say: "Now that we read the newspapers we will have what we like." And man has very gladly taken her gifts. In a similar way, when she approaches the matter of constructing a religion, woman, according to this theory, has decided to have what she wants.

What she wants is most decidedly not theology. And it is, very decidedly, a healthy race. She takes accordingly from the Scriptures what best suits her, and from the science of healing what best suits her, and of the two she constructs her faith and her rules of conduct. From the man-made religion that she has found ready to her hand she has taken the figure of the Second Person of the Trinity: from medicine,

the principle that for a person to be cured he must be "*bonæ voluntatis*." For it must be remembered that the chief social function of woman—the one which causes her the greatest pleasure and the greatest pain—is the keeping healthy of her children. A religion which does not in some sort ensure this is not a religion that can very intimately appeal to her. In Catholic countries or communities this element of satisfaction is to be found in the intercession of the Saints or of the Virgin. I remember being present at an adult baptism in Paris, and of the touching ceremony the most touching feature to me was the number of kneeling women in the rear of the little church. As soon as the baptism was completed—as soon, that is, as the convert was purged of all past sin, and able in consequence to plead weightily before the throne of grace, these women approached him and begged him to intercede for their sick children. And this possibility must have formed for them a very strong tie with their church—a motive for adhesion which is lacking in these islands. But indeed it is hardly necessary to emphasize the fact that Catholicism maintains a very close hold over its women communicants—that its chief hold on the peoples comes from them. It is only necessary to state the case of Poland, where with the men, forced by the necessities of the day to enlist in the public services, and to abandon alike their national characteristics and their faith, the women with a splendid perseverance keep alive the old traditions.

Catholicism—with its female saints, with its female religious, with its feminine element in the Divine Concord—has its chief safeguard in its women. But in these islands, which have discarded alike female saints, female religious, and the Mother of God as an object of worship, a comparative lukewarmness in attachment to established forms of worship has resulted. I am aware, of course, that the lukewarmness is only comparative, and that in England as, say, in France, the women form the substantial bulk of the congregation; nevertheless it is in England more easy to conceive of a woman's changing her religion to fall in with the views of her husband than would be the case in France.

We may set this down to the fact that Protestantism is of a nobler intellectual growth than is Catholicism, which is an evolution almost entirely of the sentiments and the weaknesses of humanity. Protestantism in getting rid of the least credible of the Christian tenets, sacrificed—nobly enough—a great deal of the appeal of the Church; it availed itself of reason at the expense of intuition. It said, to all intents and purposes: "Here are the holy writings; we will use them as a basis for our reasonings; we will allow of no corollary however attractive." By so doing it sacrificed a great part of its appeal and a great part of its authority. It sacrificed, too, it seems to me, a great part of its theological traditions and of its popular comprehensibility.

The other day one of my little daughters returned

from her convent with a rather badly scratched hand. I said that it must have hurt her a great deal, and she turned her small face up to whisper to me: "God suffered much more than that."

The phraseology struck me very forcibly: it aroused in me all that was Protestant in my early training. An English child might have said: "Jesus suffered much more"; or it would, more likely, have used some proverbial expression, or have contented itself with saying that it did hurt. But that an English child should have attributed to God—to all the persons of the Trinity—a possibility of physical suffering is, I take it, almost an impossibility. Of course, were the proposition put to the child grown a man he might, after reflection, agree that the sufferings of Christ, being of one substance with the Father, would be communicated to all the persons of the Godhead. But I am inclined to believe that no Englishman really feels these matters in that way.

Judging from my own early predispositions and from English conversations on this point, I am fairly certain that most Englishmen regard the Saviour as an adult, fairhaired male, distinct altogether from God the Father, and not very easily or conceivably blended into the mysterious and ineffable Three in One. Christ remains the visible sign of the Trinity: it is not legal to attempt to visualise God the Father: it is impossible utterly to attempt to form an idea of the Holy Ghost.

It is difficult to conceive of Jesus even as a child—

it is, at least, not usual to do so. It may be remembered that towards the middle of last century there were certain painters called pre-Raphaelites. One of these painted a picture showing the Saviour as a child subject to his parents. This picture raised a storm: it was considered blasphemous, simply because for many centuries it had been the custom in England to regard the Saviour as a grown man, aloof from most of the trials, privations and subjections of humanity. That he should be shown obeying Joseph and Mary—that he should be shown kissing his mother—these things seemed to be anathema. In fact, in the course of the centuries that had succeeded the sixteenth, there had grown up in England a cult which was almost solely that of Christ. This began without doubt as a protest against Mariolatry and the worship of the Saints. But the seed fell upon soil very fertile: it became a part of the tradition of this great and useful nation.

For England is the country of *Christism* simply because this human figure of the Saviour appeals so very strongly to a nation whose human contacts are always its first consideration. To the modern Englishman the actions or the nature of the Father are comparatively unknown: they appeal to him perhaps at moments: he is the God of Battles, precisely, and in England's military moods he is appealed to. But Christ is always with us—Christ and his eleventh commandment. We hardly know what are the attributes of the Holy Ghost, yet every word of

Christ Jesus, every action, every parable we have, all, by heart.

In a Continental city, at the end of an old market square, there will stand a church with its doors wide open. In the intervals of selling her goods the market woman will go up the steps of the church, will, before a shimmering altar, tell her beads, mutter a prayer or two, perform some act of faith. She will return to her chaffering; she may have prayed to St. Servatius, St. Eloi, or the Virgin, and her whole mind will be a matter of her cult, little fragments of religion interpenetrating the whole fabric of her inner self, little acts of faith filling in the interstices of her outer life. In this way the whole being of great continental nations is imbued with a sense of the supernatural side of religion.

In that sense the Englishman is hardly religious at all, since it is not so much the supernatural as the human side of the Deity that has a daily significance for him. His main worship is paid in no church builded by mortal hands. His Service, which is not an act of faith, but the payment of a tribute, is something apart from his life, part only of a special day, which is singled out from all the others, and dedicated to what consideration he gives to the supernatural deity.

Yet if he is not religious he is assuredly devout, since we may consider the measure of his devotion to be his desire to act in the spirit of the Master. For this tradition of Christ is a very singular and

very fine manifestation, and the Englishman, instead of asking himself: "How may I best propitiate St. Servatius?"—asks in any given contingency: "How would Christ have acted here?" He takes, in fact, the Saviour for his master and his model, and I have been very much struck upon occasions by the virulence with which even professing unbelievers in England will defend to the last word, to the utmost comma of the English New Testament, the teachings and the person of Christ.

And herein lies at once a very great strength and a very great danger to revealed religion in England. For whilst utterly unwilling to acknowledge that a personage so perfect as Christ can have been of other than miraculous origin, can have been other than a God, the Englishman troubles himself very little about the other sides of his theology. With him, indeed, his religion—Christism—is almost entirely a standard of manners. His problem, much more than the saying of "Holy, holy, holy," is that of how he shall do as he would be done by. Other Christians may hope for temporal advance and ultimate escape from Divine wrath, because they have set to their account a great number of those small acts of faith. They try, in short, to do things acceptable to the hosts of saints and the enthroned deities. But the Englishman's hopes of profit and salvation are based upon the fact that he shall be able to say he had followed his Master's teaching, who bade him be good to his fellow man.

This is, I think, the keynote of the Englishman: fierce and singular idiosyncrasies. It is the "note" of the matter. It explains the singular anthropomorphism—the singular lack of sympathetic imagination that distinguishes the Englishman. His motto is: "Do as you would be done by." That does not mean: "Examine into the other man's nature and see how he would be done by." But it does mean that, in England, upon the whole, one will find more well-intentioned and tolerant consideration than in many countries more religious. And it explains, I think, why the chief function of the English in the comity of the nations has been to show how men, in an easy, a rule-of-thumb and a bearable manner, in great numbers, scattered across the acres at home or across the seas, tolerantly and pleasantly may live together.

CONDUCT.

CHAPTER V.

CONDUCT.

THERE is a passage in the Diary of Samuel Pepys in which he quotes some speaker whose name I have forgotten. I am unable, too, to find again the passage itself. But it is to the effect that the function of the law is not to avenge but to restore. And, upon the whole, we may say that nowadays and, in the large, the function of the English law is successfully fulfilled. The English law as it stands upon the statute-books is more fitted to prevent crime than to avenge it: the English national temperament *vis-à-vis* of, say, a thief is scarcely an avenging one. If, that is to say, a thief have failed to come off with his booty, or if he have surrendered it before or after his capture, the Englishman as a rule will be contented with, or will applaud a light sentence. But it must be a sentence that will deter other criminals.

This "note," I think, permeates the whole fabric of English society. I was talking to a sheepshearer this morning. Whilst he knelt in the hot sunshine

above the hot fleeces of a panting ram he told me that the day before a casual labourer, employed during the pressure of lamb-shearing, had taken three shillings from his coat when it hung in the wool barn. I asked him if he had told the police, and he answered:

"No, nor I don't suppose I shall. At any rate, I'll give the chap a fair start. After all, he wasn't of these parts, so nobody will take him for an example."

And yesterday, lying upon the sea beach, I asked a member of our administrative class what would be done to the fellaheen of an Egyptian village. They had risen in a body and murdered some officers of the English army shooting in the Nile fields.

"Oh," he said, "they'll deport a whole lot of them to the Soudan. It is a beastly thing to do with them, poor beggars, and probably no one here will know of it. But it must be done or there would be no end of these murders. You see Englishmen are walking about the villages there all day long unarmed." . . .

At the same time, the Englishman views with equanimity the fact that the law does sanction the most appallingly vindictive sentences for crimes of the most insignificant. If you put it to a lay Englishman that it *is* appalling that a man should be sentenced to six months' hard labour for stealing a pair of shoes, he will say: "Oh well, it is the law." And, in a similar spirit, he will comment upon the fine of ten shillings upon a man who just fails to murder his wife.

In this the English legal courts differ from those of almost all other nations, since the spirit of nearly all foreign legal systems is the rendering of justice. In England the judge administers the law. He must administer the law in face of his notions of equity, of right; he must do violence to his most intimate feelings and to the spirit and sympathies of all people, if the law so demands it. I had a friend who was tried for a certain misdemeanour before a judge, whose whole private life was devoted to combating a side issue of that misdemeanour. It was, that particular crime, founded upon Atheism, though it was not exactly a manifestation of disbelief in the existence of a Deity—and, indeed, the words were never mentioned in the Court, though Mr. Justice ——, it was notorious, had a hatred of Atheists that in one or two instances had bidden fair to prejudice his career. Nevertheless, although my friend was found guilty, technically, of his misdemeanour, Mr. Justice —— passed upon him a sentence that was practically one of acquittal—the payment of the plaintiff's costs. This, of course, is a commonplace record; but my friend, sitting in the court, was well aware of the personal hatred that the judge felt towards him. He said that it felt like being in a cage with some tremendous, malevolent-eyed, wild beast prowling round the exterior and trying bar after bar by which he might enter and devour. And happening to meet Mr. Justice ——, a venerable if bad-tempered old gentleman, at a

friend's table shortly afterwards, I had the gratification to hear him interrupt a discourse upon the Etruscan vases which were the chief delight of his private existence, by a violent diatribe against my friend the misdemeanant. According to him he was, my friend, a dangerous scoundrel whom, if the law were satisfactory, he would have sentenced to penal servitude for a long term of years. But he had, of course, to administer the law.

There is no lesson to derive from this save that the average Englishman would say that Mr. Justice —— was in the right. But I fancy that, in pure reason, he was in the wrong to have inflicted a sentence so moderate when his instincts and desires—and the practice of the Courts—would have justified him in inflicting a penalty certainly more severe than the mere payment of the plaintiff's costs. I went indeed so far as to question his lordship, who happened to be a distant connection of my own, not as to this particular instance—I had indeed allowed the topic to recede far enough into the past of the conversation to allow it to pass from his mind—but as to how, in general cases, he allowed his predilections to affect his judgments. I put my question in a sufficiently deferential form, and he answered good-naturedly:

"Well, you see, there are in every judge two gentlemen rolled into one, as some one said. Now, in the case of that fellow ——"—and his mind *had* reverted to the case of my friend—"I dare say you weren't acquainted with the particulars. But it was so-and-

so . . . ."; and, leaning back in his chair and taking a sip of the barley water that his health forced him to drink even at dinner, he proceeded to sketch the case of my friend. It was instructive to see that though he was virulently unfair to the motives and the person of my friend, he stated the legal aspect of the case with an extreme temperateness. "Now," he continued, "when you have to pass judgment in such a case you have to consider not only what the criminal deserves, but what were the legal risks he ran. Indeed, I personally make it a practice to cast a general average in my mind of other judgments on that sort of case, if I don't—which I do very often—take the opinion of my fellow judges. The law, you know, is not any respecter of persons."

So that we seem to arrive at the fact that in the English lawyer there is not only a personal conscience, which may or may not sway his judgment, but there is also a legal conscience, a special casting of the average of what may be the legal public opinion of the day. And this last does undoubtedly sway our judges most considerably of all. There are, of course, cases of outrageous judgments; just as, obviously enough, there are persons who, owing to a fortunate manner in the witness-box, or to some subtle influence that it is hard to analyse, do get themselves respected. But, upon the whole, and speaking impressionistically, the spirit of the law as it is administered in England to-day is, both actually

and psychologically, wonderfully level in its manifestations.

The law, then, is no respecter of persons in England, and that is as much as to say that English law, like the typical Englishman, is singularly unimaginative, is essentially lacking in constructive sympathy. That there is one law for the rich and the poor may or may not be reasonable to the bulk of humanity in the world; but that there should be one law for doctor, man of letters or linen-draper, is a proposition that most other nations will deny. Thus, in France bankruptcy for a tradesman is a crippling and terrible catastrophe, involving loss of civil rights and other disabilities. For the French lawgiver argues (I am not concerned to say whether he is right or wrong) that the business of the tradesman being money-making, the tradesman who fails to keep his money accounts straight is a member detrimental to society. The professional man or the artist, on the other hand, according to him, devotes his chief endeavours not to the making of money, but to the advancement of his science or art, a thing beneficial to the Republic, outside the accidents of its marketability. And thus the French judge attempts to administer, not a law which respects no persons, but a law which aims at rendering an individual justice. The apparently irrational but psychologically justifiable verdicts of French juries are so many confirmations of this theory. And it is, no doubt, owing to the consciousness of this that French

lawyers in practice assume the guilt of an accused citizen, calling upon him to establish his innocence; just as it is no doubt owing to the consciousness that the law never can render an ideal justice, that the English law assumes the innocence of an accused subject. It is as if the Englishman had said in the past:

"Oh, well, the law is wonderfully capricious in the way it affects people; let us make it affect as few people as it decently need." And so we have that wonderful phrase: "The benefit of the doubt," and this tranquil, unreasoning belief in the rightness of all legal decisions, which casts so singular, so steady a light upon English character. For I think that there is nothing in the world more wonderful as a national expression than the tranquillity which falls upon England after the decision of a great case. For days, for weeks, nay, even for months, we may have been following a trial with a nearly breathless attention. We discuss the evidence in every club corner, over every restaurant table, or across the fields where the footpaths lead us. We form our private judgments; we say, "He is guilty," or "We don't believe they did it." And, when the blow falls, when the doom is pronounced, we really hold our breaths for a moment. I remember walking along the Strand not so long ago with a companion, and suddenly there flashed across the crowded, hurrying, dizzying street the announcements, in yellow, in pink, in white papers—"Result of the —— case."

It did, quite literally, call a halt to that tide. For a long time we had followed the fortunes of the thin, bold, military-looking, tired-looking prisoner in the dock. If we had not identified ourselves with his fortunes, we had felt for them the interest that one feels for a long-unsolved riddle. And I think every one of us in the Strand felt convinced that the man was innocent, in that he was too mad to be sentenced. At the block in the corner of Wellington Street we were able to stop to buy a paper from behind the pink-lettered apron of a newsvendor, who had, I remember, a black hat absolutely dun-coloured with age. As he took the penny he muttered hoarsely:

"He's got five years!"

There was not any doubt about who the He was—though that was a fame, when one comes to think of it, almost breathless: to be He for the whole crowded Strand. I looked in my companion's eyes: I know I felt some physical shock, a catch in the throat, perhaps, or a minute difficulty in standing. I said: *Five years!* and my companion looked back at me and said: "Five years!" And for an appreciable moment things really seemed to stand still, till we could take up a definite mental position with regard to this new factor in the world. And in that moment I could see the figure of a traffic policeman as he leaned back his head to call to an omnibus driver: "He's got five years!" We opened our damp broadsheet in the street and looked, to make certain.

Then my companion said: "He was guilty, then!"

That was the view at which she had arrived during her pause. And that is the point that I wish to make—that in the whole of the Strand there were all these people taking up that same point of view. "He *was* guilty, then!" It was not, I mean, in any of us to doubt the rightness of the verdict, and few people doubted the justice of the sentence. And, without giving voice to it, we framed in our minds the corollary: "He's had more than a fair trial: he has had the benefit of all the possible doubts, and therefore he *is* guilty."

And that frame of mind is a great tribute from the nation to the administrators of its laws—but it is also a very singular national symptom. For it is obvious that this benefit of the doubt, if it is beneficent to criminals at times, acts rather hardly upon the innocent accused, since he would obviously have stood the test more unflinchingly if he had come out acquitted from an ordeal in which no possible doubt existed. And for that reason, in many cases, it is nearly as much of a calamity to have been tried and acquitted as to have been tried and found guilty. I have known more than one man whose whole careers have been blasted by prosecutions that, as the phrase is, had not a leg to stand on. Still, when one meets them where men congregate one seems to hear behind their backs the whisper of: "The Recorder said that the plaintiffs had failed to make out their case." I do

not indeed know whether, to thinking men, the continental system of leaving it to the accused to "make out their cases" is not psychologically preferable. Abroad, in a sense, the law strains all its faculties to ensure a condemnation, but the human feelings of the jury have full play, and, probably, in the result, the general averages of justice or injustice are about equal in England or on the Continent.

There can, however, be no doubt that to men who feel—as opposed to men who are cold-blooded enough to think—the English system is infinitely the more desirable as an ideal. And we must remember, too, that the English state of things is the product of what is practically the oldest system of justice in the world. For, from French law, which is an evolution of the Code Napoléon, to Dutch law, which was founded comparatively lately upon the Roman, there is not a law to be found that is so much the product of an ancient and gradual growth of national necessities. The enactment that makes it penal to own a Bank of Engraving note is the most striking instance of the odd adaptability of English penal law to changing circumstances. There were, that is to say, after the '45 certain Jacobites who were still desirous of spreading confusion amongst the lieges of George II. They hit upon the stratagem of the Hanover Jack. This was a gilt coin that had upon its face the head of the reigning king—but upon its back there was shown, not St. George and the Dragon, but the Devil flying away with George II.

It was an imitation near enough to pass, with other coins, for a half-guinea, and a great number of these medals were put into circulation. When prosecutions ensued it was found that, although it was treason to counterfeit, or to pass counterfeits of, the coin of the realm, this was no counterfeit, inasmuch as the reverse differed from that of the guinea. The accused were acquitted. The legislature then passed an Act making it penal to pass medals that were colourable imitations of the king's coinage. The Jacobites replied by selling the Hanover Jacks in the street at so much a dozen. This, again, was not criminal, since it was merely selling for value, a thing entirely differing in kind from passing, which implies an attempt to deceive. Parliament, accordingly passed a law making it penal even to possess a colourable imitation of current paper or coinage. And it is this eighteenth-century statute that still makes us bound, if by misfortune we come into possession of the staple commodity of the confidence-trick man, to hand it at once to the police, or to destroy it as best we may.

This instance is striking, not only because it shows how a very old law may suffice for modern purposes, but because it shows how innate in English legal procedure is the tendency to give the prisoner the benefit of something—if not of the doubt, then of flaws in the indictment. For there can be no doubt that if, in each of these cases, the Jacobite humourists did not contravene the letter of the law, they very notoriously sinned against its spirit.

It is true that England never had a legal theory that called upon the accused or the defendant to make good his case; nevertheless, though the practice of the law might forbid this, and though, in principle, ever since the days say of Henry VIII., the spirit of the penal law was merely deterrent and that of the civil law merely restorative, there can be little doubt that the spirit of the legislature was vindictive. It met its opponents in the administration. This is strikingly shown in the case of that other "benefit"—that of clergy. Until the Reformation this was to all intents and purposes merely an ecclesiastical privilege. The Church, that is to say, contained at first all those who could read and write; later it instructed all readers and writers, and these became its special *protégés*. And these it subtracted from the felons or misdemeanants who were liable to feel the powers of the secular law.

The English Reformation—that singular movement which was only partly a manifestation of public opinion—did away, at the bidding of the cowed legislature, with the ecclesiastical courts altogether—in so far, at least, as they affected offences against the secular authorities or against lay subjects. But, although the legislature could affect them, and although the legislature could pass the savagely vindictive penal laws of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, it was unable, in face of the spirit of the whole people, to do away with this particular benefit—a benefit which in essence was entirely foreign to the practice

of the secular law. Then there ensued a long struggle between the legislature and the public conscience—a struggle which lasted for three centuries and ended, to all intents and purposes, only with the complete surrender of the legislature. At the beginning of this period benefit of clergy was extended to all offences save those of treason. Men who had stolen eggs or men who had committed murder could alike go free when they had signed their names and read a passage from the Psalms. And, indeed, in this particular manifestation at the commencement we may see something of that French spirit, that makes doctors and men of the arts comparatively free of the laws of debt because of their extraneously benefiting the Republic. For, in the sixteenth century, the man who could read and write had still a certain special value. But gradually the struggle assumed the aspect of a stubborn determination on the part of judges and juries to extend to poor devils a means of escape from hatefully vindictive penalties. As the legislature continued to extend the number of crimes that were punishable by death, so the judges continued to make proof of benefit more easy, until at last any man who had the capacity to remember certain pot-hooks and get by heart any verse of the Bible which he could pretend to read, could plead his clergy. The legislature—which came of a class more intent on the protection of property than sympathetic to the opinions or feelings of the people—replied, after several women had escaped death for stealing loaves, by gradually

limiting the crimes to which benefit of clergy could extend. As against that, the administrators of the law invented the "flaw in the indictment," giving criminals the benefit of slips of the pen to atone for the loss of the other benefit. Until at last the legislature abandoned a contest grown unequal and, as it were, with one stroke of the pen abolished the capital punishment for all crimes save wilful murder, high treason and the burning of arsenals or dockyards.*

In this way we have arrived, by the influence of a public opinion acting upon legal practitioners, at a legal practice that is eminently humane; that, in a rule-of-thumb way, works eminently well; and at a legal practice that is singularly relied upon. Litigants may nowadays find the costs of lawsuits inconveniently high, but it is to be argued that no pay can be too high that ensures the cleanhandedness of national officials. And, upon the whole, no large class of public opinion could to-day be found to endorse the words of a character in an early Victorian novel. The

* I may set down here in counter to the objection that I have here treated of criminal laws alone, the contention that our civil law has always followed the practice of the criminal—with the sole difference that, since no human life or limb is at stake, the various "benefits" have not been so marked. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, in general, the onus of proof remains upon the plaintiff, the defendant being, with the necessary modifications and the general principle that the province of the law is not to revenge but to restore, in the position of a prisoner. And, indeed, we might regard the Statute of Limitations as a special extra benefit not enjoyed by any criminals save deserters from the army.

law, in those days, appeared to be a "Hass," because it was in a transitional stage—because, in fact, the effects of the long struggle between legislature and people had not yet worn off. But nowadays we can feel to the full the influence of the simplifying and nationalising work that was done upon the body of the law during the lifetime of, say, Chancellor Lord Lyndhurst.

It is to the judges of England, influenced as they were from below and not from above, that we owe this fact, that to-day England enjoys a law that is so eminently a national expression. Like every national expression it is, thus far, full of theoretic unreason; but, like every national expression, it remains a monument of excellent practice. "It works out well," to use words that are so eminently characteristic of the English nation. It is, in fact, even as is the English Constitution itself, like an easy cloak, like an easy piece of footwear that gives pleasure to its wearer by dint of many patchings. That it has its disadvantages is obvious—that it has its unreasons is obvious, too. For we might say that the earlier stage of the law, in which crimes against property were punishable by death, was a more logical expression of the nation to whom the attainment and retaining of property more than all else is the ideal of life; to whom still, a crime against the person is one of so relatively little importance that, if a man strike another and just miss killing him, he will escape with a tiny fine, whereas if he strike just a hairsbreadth

deeper he will be hanged—the moral offence in both cases being precisely similar. I remember coming across a case in a country police-court, that brought these aspects of the law out in a singular light of absurdity. A man called Chapman had just missed killing his wife with a curious and valuable stick that he had brought from India. A month before, a labourer called Noakes was left waiting in Chapman's hall, having brought a message from a neighbouring farmer. Noakes, who was a silly, but generally honest boy, stole the stick, which appealed to his fancy, not as an object of worth but as a curiosity. Chapman, who had just failed of manslaughter with this very stick that had just been returned to him, was fined forty shillings at the petty sessions succeeding those at which Noakes was sent to six months' hard labour for stealing the stick.

And, indeed, it is one of the disadvantages of such a legal system as that of England, that the profound respect which the Englishman has for the practice of his law, blinds him to such anomalies as that which I have related above. That is one of the very cases that I had in my mind when I said that the Englishman will answer always: "Oh, well, it's the law!" to any recital of a hard case. For during the ensuing year I put this particular case of Noakes and Chapman (it had shocked me because I liked Noakes, a simple, rather vacuous youth with a great love for birds, whose nests he protected with sedulous care); I put this particular case to at least twenty English-

men. I received almost invariably that particular answer.

It hampers—this particular answer—the righting of several wrongs that do earnestly need righting; it engenders a tranquil and optimistic state of mind in which the Englishman, confident in the excellence of his judge-made legal practice, forgets that to-day, as always, there are laws that are too strong for judges, just as there occur at times judges who will warp the law into allowing them to inflict penalties that are cruel and oppressive. The Englishman, in fact, is apt to forget that the excellence of his law resides in the men who administer it—forgets, that is to say, that it is the judges, rather than the law itself, that have inherited a very great tradition. And this is in very truth what we call official optimism.

It would, indeed, be too much to say that this official optimism is produced by the excellence of the English legal system. It is, rather, this rare and valuable attribute, the product of the national characteristic reacting upon itself. English public opinion—the broad, tolerant, humanitarian, practical optimistic thing which in these islands is public opinion—has produced an excellent thing—two excellent things; since it has produced the body of the law and the spirit of the constitution. And these two excellent things filling very much the mind's eye of the public, the public is very apt to say that all is well with everything because we have always those things to fall back upon. It is, of course, difficult in

this matter to disconnect cause from effect; it is, that is to say, difficult to say whether it is because we are a nation singularly hard to rouse to discontent, that we are pleased with our state, or because our state is upon the whole so excellent that we are not easily roused to discontent.

But certain manifestations of the English spirit are really amazing. I remember going through a dense fog to a London station, to catch a train that, officially, should have left the platform at twenty-five minutes past one. At twenty-five minutes past one there was not a single train in all the sidings of the great terminus. At the almost invisible barrier the dimly-seen officials had no knowledge of when any train would leave any platform for anywhere. As the hour of train after train arrived crowd after crowd filled the station more and more densely. And, for hour after hour nothing happened. The fog deepened; the crowds grew more dense—but nothing happened. No single person proposed even to make a hostile demonstration before the booking-office; no one hooted, no one groaned. We stood there, our arms filled with parcels, string bags—it was Christmas time—rubbing against our calves. And still—nothing. At last, at a quarter-past four, a string of unlit carriages pushed its way almost soundlessly between the thick piles of humanity.

And the crowd raised a cheer—humorous, cynical—but still, a cheer. I do not think that in any conceivable world-centre this would be possible—one

could not, I mean, if one were a fanciful person, figure for one's private delectation, an imaginary planet where human beings would be so longsuffering. Yet in London, year in, year out, we endure this crippling strain upon our civic efficiency without the slightest perceptible effort to change a law that renders so farcical a service possible and permanent. It was, after all, the law that we should wait there; it is, after all, the law that permits the ceaseless recurrence of such events. And this characteristic acts balefully upon our national spirit in two distinct directions. It renders us patient in the face of this abuse; it causes us to be patient in our attitude towards every abuse; and, in the still more deleterious direction, it renders our officials nonchalant and wanting in enterprise. I will admit that it is difficult to deal with a fog, just as it is difficult for our Foreign Office to deal with, let us say, Leopold II., King of the Belgians. The one and the other are mephitic phenomena—baffling, protean. Yet, assuredly, were the national spirit at all easy to raise, we should insist that our railway officials should search among the inventors until some system were devised by which all trains at all times could be worked by blindfolded men. Yet we suffer our bodies to be wearied, our trade to be harassed, our time to be lost, and our spirits to be vexed, year in, year out, at odd moments, at hurried seasons of the year. We let our officials grow slack, our inventors lack that incentive ot reward and

encouragement that is so necessary to our national energy. We are fond of taking refuge in the soothing consideration that we, the English race, have been so much the pioneers of the railway system that nowadays we have to suffer for inconveniences that were unforeseeable by the early inventors. In this case, too, we say. "Ah, well, it's the law." It is, that is to say, the law that pioneers work roughly, and contented with having so early led the van, we do not harass the officials who have inherited the merits of the long-dead pioneers. We have still the belief that, if it were absolutely necessary, something would be done. Someone, probably, will turn up from somewhere, and do it for us. Competition will force it or an eventual decrease in the use of soft coal.

And, just as we hinder our national and material welfare by this official optimism, so we jeopardise our national soul by allowing our Foreign Office to remain impotent in the face of a dismal potentate, the organiser of a band of callous scoundrels. I was looking yesterday at a photograph; it showed, seated against the light, a sculpturesque nude form. A bearded, wonderfully moulded man sat, his knees nearly up to his mournful face, gazing inscrutably and without expression at two small objects. These were the hand and foot of his child. And the child, a little girl, had been eaten by men, and the men were the soldiery of a Christian monarch whom we, as a nation, had helped to set in power over the regions in which the photograph was taken; a

monarch whom we still maintain in this authority. Every voter in this country is directly responsible for the mournful gaze of that negro.

It was open, that is to say, to every voter of the United Kingdom to be aware of this fact; it was equally open to him to exact from the parliamentary candidate for whom he voted a definite pledge that Great Britain would do its uttermost to put an end to the reign of Leopold II., absolute monarch of the Congo Free State. That the task would be a difficult one for our officials I am not set to deny. The late Foreign Minister when privately urged to move in the matter, said that his hands were tied by the fact that abuses of natives as great in degree as those to be witnessed in the Congo were to be witnessed in a certain portion of the British Dominions. In consequence his hands were tied; the Belgians responsible having threatened to raise against him a *tu quoque* terrible enough. But, within reason, it should be possible for the British nation either to reform the offending colony or to save its reputation and regain its freedom of criticism by cutting the colony in question adrift from the assuredly glorious traditions of the British Empire.*

* I do not mean to say that the Queensland question was the only difficulty that faced Lord Lansdowne, and, unbacked as he was by any strong public feeling, the complicated international questions aroused by the peculiarly guaranteed position of Leopold II. were sufficient to warrant the Government in taking very little action upon the report of their official. But this fact is not the more

This, of course, is no very important matter; no doubt a negro child or two must suffer that the world may march triumphantly towards Occidental civilisation. I do not raise it with any propagandist motive, but merely to illustrate a national characteristic, just as I have suffered much, and shall probably continue to suffer much, from the erratic train services of several lines without attempting to cure them with my pen. It is, in short, not my affair at all to attempt to better the world as I see it, but merely to attempt to render, to account for, the defects of the singular and very high qualities of the nation that gives me shelter.

The defects of the Englishman's qualities are strange in practice, but obvious enough when we consider the root fact from which they spring. And that root fact is simply that the Englishman feels very deeply and reasons very little. It might be argued, superficially, that because he has done little to remedy the state of things on the Congo, that he is lacking in feeling. But, as a matter of fact, it is really because he is aware—subconsciously if you will—of the depth of his capacity to feel, that the Englishman takes refuge in his particular official optimism. He hides from himself the fact that there are in the world greed, poverty, hunger, lust or evil passions, simply because he knows that if he comes

creditable to us as a nation, though it may be taken as largely absolving the Government which exists to put in force the national will.

to think of them at all they will move him beyond bearing. He prefers, therefore, to say—and to hypnotise himself into believing—that the world is a very good—an all-good—place. He would prefer to believe that such people as the officials of the Congo Free State do not really exist in the modern world. People, he will say, do not do such things.

As quite a boy I was very intimate with a family that I should say was very typically English of the middle class. I spent a great part of my summer holidays with them and most of my week-ends from school. Lady C——, a practical, comfortable, spectacled lady, was accustomed to call herself my second mother, and, indeed, at odd moments, she mothered me very kindly, so that I owe to her the recollection of many pleasant, slumbrous and long summer days, such as now the world no longer seems to contain. One day I rowed one of the daughters up a little stream from the sea, and halting under the shade of a bridge where the waters lapped deliciously, and swallows flitted so low as to brush our heads, I began to talk to the fair, large, somnolent girl of some problem or other—I think of poor umbrella tassel menders or sweated industries that at that time interested me a great deal. Miss C—— was interested or not interested in my discourse; I don't know. In her white frock she lay back among the cushions and dabbled her hands in the water, looking fair and cool, and saying very little. But next morning Lady C—— took me into the rose garden, and, having

qualified her remarks with: "Look here. You're a very good boy, and I like you very much," forbade me peremptorily to talk to Beatrice about "things."

It bewildered me a little at the time because, I suppose, not being to the English manner born, I did not know just what "things" were. And it harassed me a little for the future, because I did not know at the time, so it appeared to me, what else to talk about but "things." Nowadays I know very well what "things" are; they include, in fact, religious topics, questions of the relations of the sexes, the conditions of poverty-stricken districts—every subject from which one can digress into anything moving. That, in fact, is the crux, the Rubicon that one must never cross. And that is what makes English conversation so profoundly, so portentously, troublesome to maintain. It is a question of a very fine game, the rules of which you must observe. It is as if one were set on making oneself interesting with the left hand tied behind one's back. And, if one protests against the inconveniences attendant upon the performance of this prime conjuring trick, one is met by the universal: "Oh, well; it's the law!"

The ramifications of this characteristic are so infinite that it would be hopeless to attempt to exhaust them. And the looking out for them leads one into situations of the most bizarre. Thus, I was talking about a certain book that was hardly more than mildly "shocking" to a man whose conversation among men is singularly salacious, and whose life

is notoriously not clean. Yet of this particular book he said, in a manner that was genuinely pained:

"It's a thing that the law ought to have powers to suppress." There was no doubt that he meant what he said. Yet he could recount with approval and with gusto incidents that rendered pale and ineffectual the naive passions depicted in the work in question. But Mr. N——'s position was plainly enough defined and sufficiently comprehensible; it said in effect: "These things are natural processes which must exist. But it is indelicate to mention them." And you may set it down that "delicacy" is the note of the English character—a delicacy that is almost the only really ferocious note that remains in the gamut. It is retained at the risk of honour and self-sacrifice, at the cost of sufferings that may be life-long; so that we are presented with the spectacle of a whole nation bearing every appearance of being extraordinarily tongue-tied, and extraordinarily unable to repress its emotions.

I have assisted at two scenes that in my life have most profoundly impressed me with those characteristics of my countrymen. In the one case I was at a railway station awaiting the arrival of a train of troops from the front. I happened to see upon the platform an old man, a member of my club, a retired major. He, too, was awaiting the train; it was bringing back to him his son, a young man who had gone out to the war as of extraordinary promise. He

had, the son, fulfilled this promise in an extraordinary degree; he was an only child, and the sole hope for the perpetuation of an ancient family—a family of whose traditions old Major H—— was singularly aware and singularly fond. At the attack upon a kopje of ill-fated memory, the young man, by the explosion of some shell, had had an arm, one leg, and one side of his face completely blown away. Yet, upon that railway platform I and the old man chatted away very pleasantly. We talked of the weather, of the crops, of the lateness of the train, and kept, as it were, both our minds studiously averted from the subject that continuously was present in both our minds. And, when at last the crippled form of the son let itself down from the train, all that happened was the odd, unembarrassing clutch of left hand to extended right—a hurried, shuffling shake, and Major H—— said:

"Hullo, Bob!" his son: "Hullo, Governor!"—And nothing more. It was a thing that must have happened, day in day out, all over these wonderful islands; but that a race should have trained itself to such a Spartan repression is none the less worthy of wonder

I stayed, too, at the house of a married couple one summer. Husband and wife were both extremely nice people—"good people," as the English phrase is. There was also living in the house a young girl, the ward of the husband, and between him and her—in another of those singularly expressive phrases

—an attachment had grown up. P—— had not only never "spoken to" his ward; his ward, I fancy, had spoken to Mrs. P——. At any rate, the situation had grown impossible, and it was arranged that Miss W—— should take a trip round the world in company with some friends who were making that excursion. It was all done with the nicest tranquillity. Miss W——'s luggage had been sent on in advance; P—— was to drive her to the station himself in the dogcart. The only betrayal of any kind of suspicion that things were not of their ordinary train was that the night before the parting P—— had said to me: "I wish you'd drive to the station with us to-morrow morning." He was, in short, afraid of a "scene."

Nevertheless, I think he need have feared nothing. We drove the seven miles in the clear weather, I sitting in the little, uncomfortable, hind seat of the dogcart. They talked in ordinary voices—of the places she would see, of how long the posts took, of where were the foreign banks at which she had credits. He flicked his whip with the finest show of unconcern—pointed at the church steeple on the horizon, said that it would be a long time before she would see that again—and then gulped hastily and said that Fanny ought to have gone to be shod that day, only she always ran a little lame in new shoes, so he had kept her back because Miss W—— liked to ride behind Fanny.

I won't say that I felt very emotional myself, for what of the spectacle I could see from my back seat

was too interesting. But the parting at the station was too surprising, too really superhuman not to give one, as the saying is, the jumps. For P—— never even shook her by the hand; touching the flap of his cloth cap sufficed for leave-taking. Probably he was choking too badly to say even "Good-bye"—and she did not seem to ask it. And, indeed, as the train drew out of the station P—— turned suddenly on his heels, went through the booking-office to pick up a parcel of fish that was needed for lunch, got into his trap and drove off. He had forgotten me—but he had kept his end up.

Now, in its particular way, this was a very fine achievement; it was playing the game to the bitter end. It was, indeed, very much the bitter end, since Miss W—— died at Brindisi on the voyage out, and P—— spent the next three years at various places on the Continent where nerve cures are attempted. That I think proved that they "cared"—but what was most impressive in the otherwise commonplace affair, was the silence of the parting. I am not concerned to discuss the essential ethics of such positions, but it seems to me that at that moment of separation a word or two might have saved the girl's life and the man's misery without infringing eternal verities. It may have been desirable, in the face of the eternal verities—the verities that bind together all nations and all creeds—that the parting should have been complete and decently arranged. But a silence so utter, a so demonstrative lack of tenderness, seems to me to

be a manifestation of a national characteristic that is almost appalling.

Nevertheless, to quote another of the English sayings, hard cases make bad law, and the especial province of the English nation is the evolution of a standard of manners. For that is what it comes to when one says that the province of the Englishman is to solve the problem of how men may live together. And that, upon the whole, they are on the road to the solution of that problem few people would care to deny. I was talking in Germany last year to a much-travelled American, and he said to me that it might be taken for granted that English manners were the best in the world. In Turks, in Greeks, in Americans, in Germans, in French, or in Redskins certain differing points were considered to distinguish the respective aristocracies—regard for truth, quiet cordiality, softness of voice, independence of opinion and readiness of quiet apprehension—each of these things were found in one or the other nations separately and were regarded as the height of manners. And all these things were to be found united in the Englishman.

Personally, I think that the American was right; but I do not wish to elevate the theory into a dogma. And against it, if it be acknowledged, we must set the fact that to the attaining of this standard the Englishman has sacrificed the arts—which are concerned with expression of emotions—and his knowledge of life, which cannot be attained to by a man who sees the world as all good; and much of his motive-

power as a world force which can only be attained by a people ready to employ to its uttermost the human-divine quality of discontent.

It is true that in repressing its emotions this people, so adventurous and so restless, has discovered the secret of living. For not the railway stations alone, these scenes of so many tragedies of meeting and parting, but every street and every office would be uninhabitable to a people could they see the tragedies that underlie life and voice the full of their emotions. Therefore, this people which has so high a mission in the world has invented a saving phrase which, upon all occasions, unuttered and perhaps unthought, dominates the situation. For, if in England we seldom think it and still more seldom say it, we nevertheless feel very intimately as a set rule of conduct, whenever we meet a man, whenever we talk with a woman: "You will play the game." That an observer, ready and even eager to set down the worst defects of the qualities in a people, should have this to say of them is a singular and precious thing—for that observer at least. It means that he is able to go about the world in the confidence that he can return to a restful place where, if the best is still to be attained to, the worst is nevertheless known—where, if you cannot expect the next man in the street to possess that dispassionate, that critical, that steady view of life that in other peoples is at times so salutary, so exhilarating and so absolutely necessary, he may be sure that his neighbour, temperamentally and, to

all human intents, will respect the law that is written and try very conscientiously to behave in accordance with that more vital law which is called Good Conduct. It means that there is in the world a place to which to return.

L'ENVOI.

L'ENVOI.

I TOOK my doctor—one of my, alas! too many doctors—to the play some time ago. He was, this Doctor K——, a typical Englishman. It is nothing to the point that he was born in Glasgow and had a Spanish mother. For he was fair, firm in the jaw, with a drooping moustache, keen, rather reflecting grey eyes that quailed before no glance, a devout respect for tradition and a devout, ironic contempt for what he called "the Radicals," though no one by disposition and in his own life could be more Radical. The play was one of those relatively good but positively bad pieces of false sentiment that occasionally make a success in London. It turned upon the elopement of a married woman from a husband who was impossibly bad, with a lover who was impossibly good, in the company, and under the chaperonage of an aunt who was altogether impossible. The chief actress had one property—a worried look, and she had nothing else, except, of course, a certain bodily charm. She used her worried look and nothing else for every possible occasion, gazing always into a great distance and absently brushing a curl from her fore-

head. This performance grew monotonous to me and, at about the 25th "scene between husband and wife," I leant back in my chair and said to my companion:

"She is very bad."

Still leaning forward, intent, he turned his head towards me and uttered, irritated, shocked and distracted by my callousness:

"But think of her temptations."

I was thinking of how the actress performed—he of how he would have had his sister—or possibly the woman he was in love with—behave if her husband treated her as badly as the stage-husband treated his wife. And that is how, it seems to me, the typical Englishman behaves at all plays—or at this spectacle which is life. He thinks so much about how he would have himself behave—or his sister, or the woman he loves—that he loses, once and for ever, the critic in the sympathiser. And that is the main note of English life—that, that the Englishman is always a poet, he is almost never a critic.

For the poet is the man who acts as far as in him may be in accord with a certain high and aloof standard of morals. He views life, not as it is, but as it should be if, in some golden age, he himself were not driven to play the mean part that, almost invariably, he does play. If he idealises himself it is because he has ideals, it is because he sees himself, to the bitter and disillusionising end, as a hero. For, if you catch an Englishman, or if, which is more often the case, he catches himself, in an act of

meanness, he will feel angry, irritated—he will feel above all a sense of the flagrant unfairness of Fate. He will protest, and it will be true: "This is not the real I; this is not the normal I; I am, really, a man of high standards. This is an accident that, set against my whole record, does not really count."

In this he differs very radically from the men of one other nation, who will shrug their shoulders and say: "What would you have? Man is a mean beast at bottom"; or from the man of yet another nation, who will say: "I did this because I wished it; *everything* that I wish is right!" For he will admit, your Englishman, that he ought to have played the game, and he will believe that, really, the game is a perfectly practicable one. Only a cursed piece of bad luck has, in this instance, forced him to lift his voice or do whatever else it is that circumstance has coerced him into doing. The number of living Englishmen who have never told a lie to gain a material advantage must be incredible; the number of living Englishmen who would never, save at the cost of a shrinking like that from a touch upon a sore place, tell a lie to get out of a scrape must be almost equally large. And this is not only because of the incessant clamour of the meanest of all proverbs —it is because the Englishman believes that his neighbour does not tell lies, and he hates to think himself a meaner man than his neighbour. That honesty is the best policy he may or may not believe, but his official optimism makes him believe that

people do not tell lies. Nothing, I think, wounds an Englishman more than to discover his child in its first lie; consternation, agony, a half glimpse of all the tragedy that life may hold, beset him at once, and, after a moment devoted to a sort of inarticulate prayer, he sets to with a will to force upon his child's mind the fact that a lie is the one unpardonable offence. He tells his son that he will forgive him any sin so long as it is at once owned to; he subjects himself to the possibility of any annoyance if only he may make his child truth-telling. He enjoins these things upon all his nurses, upon all his servants, upon all his educators. For, for instance, he will send his son to no school where the masters do not profess to act upon this principle. He will, that is to say, certainly send his son to no school where the ushers are allowed to be spies upon the boys. In that way he fosters in his children a belief that the universe is run upon those lines—that the world will pardon, the Almighty favour beyond his deserts, the man who is ready to confess to his faults when he is asked about them.

The defects of this policy are twofold. For, in the first place, the teaching is too soft, too optimistic, and, in the second, a man finds out that there are in life many sins that he can commit without ever being asked about them by any other man. Thus a hedonistic cult is apt, more particularly in after life, to lead a man to disaster. I do not say that, as a system, this discipline of truth-telling is worse or

better than, say, the French system of spying plus confession to a priest. It is only different, and, if it is probably worse for the individual, it is almost certainly better for his neighbours. In the result, the Frenchman believes in honour, which is a curious cross between great achievements and not being found out; the Englishman believes in probity, which is a cross, equally curious, between behaving justly and having undue allowance made for his faults. Probably, if we were all to check exactly the ethical results we should find that the moral balance of English and French individuals worked out exactly equal, the Frenchman gaining and losing more, the Englishman less.

This characteristic of the Englishman is the more remarkable in that he knows very well that the truth is an impracticable thing, a thing to make life a weariness, since, hard pressed, he will acknowledge that life itself—unless we console ourselves with illusions—is an illusion. He has come far enough away from his Elizabethans, yet he is still so saturated with their quotations that he is singularly open to convictions of the transience, of the shadow-nature, of life itself. For no one is so open as the Englishman to being impressed, say, by the mottoes upon dials. He will read: "For our time is a very shadow that passeth away"—and though he will put the conviction from him as fast as he may, he will, nevertheless, feel it for the moment, very intimately. The fact is—and it is one of the irritating quali-

ties of this singular nation—that, whatever the Englishman may be called, he cannot be styled a materialist. For the materialist looks things in the face; the idealist never does, but weaves around them instead a veil of values that are purely relative. If you ask an Englishman why the truth is valuable, he will say: because it is the truth. If you press him still further he will say, as like as not: "Magna est veritas et prevalebit"—and, as likely as not, it will be because of this sounding phrase that he really sets truth upon a pedestal.

If he would open his eyes—or with his eyes closed—he might see a thousand instances in which truth has not prevailed. He might, that is to say, see instances enough to make him question his dogma. But he will take refuge in his quotation, and there, for him, is the end of the matter. He will never carry his analysis of life sufficiently far to allow him to say that a society is conceivable the basis of whose relationship is a lie; that, in fact, it is really because the truth is upon the whole a convenience, a simplification of relationships, that truth-telling communities prosper. If you put it before him that the truth is convenient as a standard simply because it saves time, he will agree. He will agree, too, that a market in which all the vendors tell the truth is a market that will save so much time that it will be able to handle a greater number of goods than a market in which the buyer must test every handful of peas. In this dim way

he has discovered the practical value, as he has discovered so many of the other practical values, of altruism. But, not content with that, he must needs look out for a special and mystical value—a moral value that, precisely, will prevail because of the greatness of the principle.

The Englishman, in fact, *is* the poet. He is not the poet because in this use of truth he is alone among the nations. But he unites in himself the practical virtues of all the nations: he has assimilated *all* the quotations. Upon a pedestal as high as truth he puts, for instance, cleanliness. Now cleanliness is of the greatest practical value in a man, and it is obvious that a nation that washes will have a great advantage over a nation less stringent in its ablutions, simply because that nation will contain a greater percentage of healthy individuals with alert brains. The Englishman accordingly elevates this characteristic into a mystical virtue, and says that cleanliness is next to godliness—putting a purely material factor into the same range of ideas as a purely spiritual virtue. He carries, naturally, this idea into practice—so that, for an Englishman, a hero has no value if his face be not minutely clean. For how many times in the course of one's social career will one not hear: "Oh, one couldn't know S——. He doesn't look as if he ever washed." Yet S—— is the greatest living metaphysician. Very similarly, the Englishman attaches a mystical value to things that have no immediate or obvious value at

all. For how often, again, has one not heard it said of So-and-So that he is a "thorough sportsman." And to these words attaches a special significance that no one who is not an Englishman can at all comprehend. For to it we attach the corollary that So-and-So is trustworthy, socially possible, truthful, sober, cleanly, sane and generous. So-and-So, in fact, may be trusted to be a good fellow. And in so trusting him we are in the right, since the thorough sportsman—as apart from the man who merely excels, say, at steeplechase riding—on account of the fact that he "plays the game" and lives in the open air a fairly abstemious life, is pretty certain to be "straight" and is pretty certain to have a sufficient stock of technical and entertaining anecdotes, to be pretty good company. He will breed sound children; he will vote according to his conscience; he will be loyal to the plot of earth that bore him. In consequence, he is a valuable citizen; so we assign to the sport that he follows a mystical value.

And, as another corollary, with an almost invariable wrong-headedness, we set about ruining the sport of the moment by "specialising" it. So that cricket, which has a national value of the very highest kind, and a mystical value too, since "playing cricket" is synonymous with pursuing honourable courses—cricket has been practically ruined and reduced to mathematical displays of tactics so scientific that no mere amateur very much cares any longer to take part in a game. And, similarly, we have ruined

football, croquet, hunting, pheasant-shooting—and we are ruining Bridge and have long since ruined the great game of racing.

Nevertheless, what the Englishman pursues in all these things—in truth-telling, cleanliness, or games—is a personal record. And there, again, he is the poet. For he desires never to have told a lie, never to have been unclean, never to have infringed a rule in any game. And he does these things, he has these aspirations to satisfy a certain inward sense. He does not do them for glory alone, not for health alone, and not alone to escape punishment, but as it were to preserve a sort of virginity in a fine wrong-headedness—just as now and then you will still come across a countryman of great age cherishing an invincible pride in never having been in a railway train.

And here again is another great strength of the Englishman, since there are many nations that revel in sport, in truth-telling, or in the mania of personal ablutions; but in no other nation are so many of the civic and the practical virtues so worked into the mystical code of life. The Frenchman loves sport as practically as the Englishman; the German loves truth as unreasoningly; the Japanese excels all Occidental nations in the number of times that he submits his cuticle to the influence of hot water. But the man of these islands, as it were avid after proverbs, takes them from the German, the French, the Spaniard, the Swedes, and even from the Irish, and out of them builds up the typical Englishman.

It is for this reason that one may, with some confidence, set down the fact that the English is the type of the future. For, being born of the best types of so many other races, the English unite nowadays in themselves all the virtues of a special sort—all the perpetuating virtues of the Occidental nations. That they accept the world and do not grumble at the rules of the game—that they have nothing in them of the negational, and little of the questioning, frame of mind, only make the forecast the more probable. For a person who accepts the rules of, say, Bridge, and does not question the justice of giving a person thirty marks merely because he holds three aces, whether he employ them well or ill—the person who plays the game without being troubled by introspection, will obviously consider the game better worth playing and will play it better. That is what one calls unimaginativeness, and there is little doubt that to be unimaginative is to be unhandicapped for the practical business of life.

So that, just as the English language, on account of its romantic traditions, its utter unreason, and its slipshod practicability is probably destined to be the language of the future, so the English frame of mind, which unites all these characteristics, is almost logically destined to be the frame of mind of the world man of the future. I do not say that this prospect does not appal me—I merely state the fact. And perhaps one may be even optimistic in face of it. For, just as the English language is so vague and

unconnected an instrument that one may turn it to the uses of a clear Latin frame of mind—of a long-drawn-out and tenacious Germanic, or a misty and "locally-coloured" Celtic verse-prose, it is possible, without going outside of England, to find men to suit one's mood whatever it may be. I do not mean to say actually that there are so many Russians, Prussians, Hindoos or Chinese in England that it is possible to live all one's personal life amidst these foreigners; what I mean is, that the Englishman himself, if one digs into him, if one presses one's arguments home sufficiently, is able, romantically if you will, to assimilate almost any point of view, since probably in his ancestry he unites the most widely-differing individuals. It is not, in fact, in his mind that he is true to type, but solely in his national manifestations. He will receive the culture of any nation; he will even, given the chance, feel all sorts of their national patriotisms. And if he says that Garibaldi or David King of the Jews were really Englishmen, this signifies actually that the Englishman is able to appreciate to the full the heroism, the spirit of national endeavour of Italians as of Hebrews. When, in fact, the Englishman says, "These fellows are Englishmen," he means, "We are at least, in part, Italians," or Greeks, or Lost Tribes. He never attains to this scientific statement of the case simply because he is a poet—and the poet states deep truths in the phrases of imagery. He is, in fact, the poet through

and through in his preference for the fine phrase, in his self-centring, in his anthropomorphism, in his idealism, and, above all, in his want of sympathy. For the poet's business is constructive; it is not analytical. He has to frame a world—a portion of a world—for himself. Especially he is not analytical—and no person can be sympathetic who is wanting in the faculty of analysis. He may be kind, he may be genial, he may be the pleasantest of company constructively; but he will not have the gift of sympathy. I have at the present moment a cook with a perfect mania for rescuing fledglings that have fallen from the nests. She keeps these little things with their enormous mouths in a number of baskets near the stove. She feeds them sedulously, all of them, from larks to thrushes, from robins to chaffinches, upon a mixture of bread sopped in water and crushed hemp seed. Some of them live to pass their days in cages; many of them die. But she never stays to enquire whether a diet of bread and hemp seed may suit, say, a lark, as it will suit a sparrow. It has for her, this diet, a mystic, a poetic significance. And she never stays to enquire whether Nature, that gives fallen nestlings over to the swift death of cold or at the hands of rodents, is not more kind; for she has a poet's love of the pretty creatures. I have another friend with a mania for sending all the fallen to Canada. He persuades them there, he opens his purse to send them there: tramps, prostitutes, discontented postmen, consumptives, broken-down men

of letters or incipient barristers; he dodges them past the medical inspectors in the Liverpool gangways. Some of them prosper, some of them die, and many, no doubt, go to hell. But, to my friend it is all one, since to him Canada appears to offer a paradise of golden grain fields, and it is in these that a man finds health and high thoughts.

And that, too, is the Englishman in his national manifestations. He takes the subject races—Maltese, Hindus, Malays, Bengalis, Zulus, Irishmen, Burmese—he feeds them on the sopped bread of English constitutional lines, he educates them with the crushed hempseed of English codes, Christism and the rules of the game. Some of them live, some of them die, many of them go to hell. And so there has arisen the great tradition of the British Raj. That nature is more kindly, that allows the Hindu to starve in his own way, is a proposition—whether it be right or wrong—that never occurs to him. Immense, tolerant, wise in its views, assimilative up to a point but intensely timid intellectually, intensely afraid to probe things to the depths, the English nation slowly makes its way towards becoming the home of every man. Its intellectual timidity, its very want of sympathy, arises from the Englishman's necessity to have something fixed, to have some standard, some model. So that just as the Englishman accepts an Anglicised Christ Jesus for his personal model, so he accepts the British Constitution and the British frame of mind as the standard accord-

ing to which he must deal with the undying Celt. If he fails it is because of his very virtues which are miasma to certain peoples.

For the Englishman is so much a creature of the game that he is intensely wearied if he is told that the game of life has no rules. He is worried, because he is intellectually lost directly an accepted belief is destroyed. It is not that he loves the accepted belief because it is a truth, since he loves it only as a standard. He hates the Iconoclast because the Iconoclast gives him the trouble of finding a new proverb to elevate into a divine dogma. In the great drink question, for instance, he has accepted, upon the whole, the principle of the restriction of licences. Yet it is certainly open to question whether, for a hundred psychological reasons, the unrestricted sale of drink might not conserve better the interests of temperance. Or, if he could once accept that the unrestricted sale of drink were the millennial state, he would find it equally difficult to allow for a moment that the restricted licence might find something to be said for it. For, what he dreads above all things is a world in a fluid state; what he suspects above all things is the open mind. He wants, above all things intellectual, that "something settled" which will allow him to make new practical plans.

These, in short, are the defects of his qualities—the great defect being his want of sympathetic imagination. It is this that has got him his reputation for hypocrisy—a reputation that is singularly

undeserved. The fall of an idealist seems to be greater than the fall of a cynic, because he maintains that the world is perfectible. Yet, actually, idealist and cynic are of one flesh, and the temptation that brings down the one is none the less great for the other. And for the rest, the Englishman is singularly human.

He is this because of his hopefulness, his optimism and his eternal childishness, his unreason, things all which make him good to live with. Speaking for myself, a man of no race and few ties—or of many races and many ties—I know perhaps one Englishman and perhaps two Englishwomen that are absolutely and to the end sympathetic to me. I know twenty foreigners that I could put up with for long periods. I know just one corner of these green and fertile islands that I really love with all my heart, and one English city. But I know a dozen foreign districts where, too, I could dwell in comfort for a long time. But I know very well where the pull lies. I know very well that, when the key of the street is given to me, it is that one English city, it is that one corner of England, it is that one Englishman and those one or two Englishwomen that will call me back in the end.

I may well say in my pride: there is no reason why I should dwell in any one spot. But in my heart I have proved that this boast is a vain one. Heaven knows why this is so; but I remember being "abroad" for a long space of time, amongst people the most sympathetic, the most benevolent, the most

instructed, the most enlightened, speaking languages that, logically, were better adapted to express thoughts than is this amorphous and fragmentary language that I now write. There was no reason why I should not have set up my home, deepened my associations, taken up again old ties of blood in that foreign land. There was no reason at all.

Yet somehow, at nights, there rose up before my eyes a cottage, black against the wintry sky, the stars being between the black and velvety lines of bare elms in this place where now I write. And by day, in the green and sunlit valleys, by the borders of a great lake, I was obsessed always with an intense longing to see once more the sails of ships above the sea wall, the wide stretch of land, the church spire of Lydd breaking the distant horizon—and I longed, ah! beyond bearing, to hear English spoken again; I longed, beyond bearing, to be in the mists, the lamplight, the smell of asphalte, of horsedung and of humanity that so distinguish the English capital. And more than anything I longed to see again those one or two Englishmen and women. . . .

Of course, habit may have done much to create these feelings—early associations, early readings, the passage of time, the mere fact of having lived longer in these places than in others. But I think that England, more than any other land, has the power to exercise this attraction simply because in England it is so easy to form ties, because life is so easy to live, because the issues of life are so simple.

It is obviously England that has made the English; it is the climate, the shapes of the land, the moisture that covers walls with lichens, the rain upon the fertile soils, the great valley in a river basin set towards the East. It is these things that have engendered the tranquil state of mind, the optimism, the contentment, the belief—illusion if you will—that life is worth living. It is because, in fact, his climate and his fertile fields give to him this belief, or this illusion, that the Englishman really does make such a pleasant thing of life whether in the cities or in the country. We imagine perhaps signs of change in the national psychology. And I am quite prepared to have it said that these pages—if they get at any spirit at all—get only at a national spirit that is already on the wane. We are, it will be said, getting Germanised or Americanised or automobilised or electrified. But I think that whilst England remains England, with its climate and its greenery, these new tendencies will do little more than be assimilated and converted as it were into a new language expressing always the old thought. For, if this people be not the chosen people, this land will be always one that every race would choose for its birthings and its buryings until the last Aaron shall lead the last of the conquering legions across the world.

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